CITY HILIGHTS

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EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIONS WITH INDIAN AND FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES

QUICK READ

Understanding all religions promotes peace: SP

Udupi

Superintendent of Police Hariram Shankar said that understanding the practices and cultures of all religions is essential to spreading the message of peace in society. He was speaking after inaugurating the Christmas get-together organised by the Udupi Diocese for media representatives. Describing Christmas as a festival celebrated collectively by people of all communities, the SP said that the fundamental objective of all religions across the world is to strengthen social unity. He noted that religion plays a vital role in shaping moral, social and spiritual values, and fosters a sense of togetherness in society. He called upon people to join hands in building a strong and united India.

Air India Express to resume Mangaluru–Muscat flights

Mangaluru

Air India Express will restore direct air connectivity between Mangaluru and Muscat from March 2026, operating two flights per week. The IXE–MCT–IXE service (IX 817/818) will operate every Sunday and Tuesday. The first flight from Mangaluru to Muscat (IX 817) is scheduled to operate on March 1, 2026, with the return flight (IX 818) operating on the same day. The second service will operate on March 3, followed by flights on March 8 and 10, March 15 and 17, and March 22 and 24, respectively. The summer schedule for 2026 will commence on March 29, following which the timings and schedules of flights from Mangaluru are expected to change.

Fishing trawl boat gutted by fire at sea

Mangaluru

A fishing trawl boat named Mashrik, which had ventured into deep sea for fishing, was gutted by fire, boat owner Fatima Shafa has complained to the Mangaluru coastal security police station and the deputy director of the fisheries department. While fishing about 12 nautical miles off the Mangaluru coast, the fishermen noticed flames suddenly erupting from the engine room of the boat. Though attempts were made to douse the fire, they were unsuccessful. The crew then sought help from a nearby fishing boat named Mizan, which was operating in the same area. The fishermen were shifted safely to the assisting boat and escaped unhurt.

29 check posts set up in Udupi to curb illegal sand mining

Udupi district police intensified action against illegal sand mining by establishing 29 check posts across the district.

UDUPI

As part of a major crackdown on illegal sand mining and quarrying activities, the Udupi district police have established 29 check posts across the district to monitor the transportation of construction materials. The move is aimed at curbing unauthorised extraction and movement of sand and stone, while also safeguarding government revenue lost due to illegal practices.

Police personnel have been deployed round the clock at these check posts, operating in both day and night shifts. Vehicles transporting sand, red stone, building stone, and manufactured sand (M-sand) are being thoroughly inspected to verify permits and ensure payment of mandatory government royalty. The intensified surveillance comes amid growing concerns over environmental damage and revenue losses caused by illegal mining and transportation.

According to police officials, since December 6, a total of 3,966 vehicles have been inspected across various check posts in the district. During these inspections, 11 vehicles were found transporting construction materials without valid permits and without paying the required royalty to the government. Prompt action was taken against the violators in accordance with existing laws and procedures.

In one specific case within the limits of the Manipal police station, a vehicle involved in illegal sand transportation was seized. A case was registered against both the driver and the vehicle owner for violating mining and transportation regulations. Police said the action was taken to send a strong message against illegal sand movement in the district.

The remaining 10 vehicles found in violation were seized under mahazar and subsequently reported to the Udupi Mines and Geology Department for further legal proceedings.

Smart meters mandatory for new power connections

MESCOM clarified that smart meters will be compulsory for all new electricity connections in Karnataka from January 2026.

MANGALURU

In line with the directive issued by the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC), the Mangaluru Electricity Supply Company (MESCOM) has announced that installation of smart meters will be mandatory for all new electricity connections across Karnataka, except for irrigation pump sets. The clarification was issued to address concerns raised by consumers and electrical contractors regarding space requirements and additional costs associated with smart meters.

MESCOM stated that the directive applies only to new electricity connections obtained on or after January 1, 2026. As smart meters will be installed exclusively for new connections, the utility clarified that there is no requirement for consumers to provide additional or separate space specifically for the meters. The smart meters will be accommodated within the standard installation framework followed for new connections.

Addressing apprehensions about costs, MESCOM emphasised that sufficient time has been provided for consumers, builders, and contractors to prepare for the transition. Since the implementation date is set for January 1, 2026, stakeholders have more than a year to factor the requirement into planning and construction processes. The utility reiterated that the move is part of a broader effort to modernise the power distribution system and improve efficiency, transparency, and accuracy in electricity consumption measurement.

Importantly, MESCOM clarified that existing electricity consumers will not be affected by the directive. Installation of smart meters is not mandatory for current connections, and there is no requirement for existing consumers to replace their conventional meters at this stage. This assurance was aimed at dispelling fears of forced upgrades or additional financial burden on present users.

Smart meters are expected to enable real-time monitoring of electricity consumption, reduce manual meter reading errors, and help consumers better manage their energy usage.

Government school students experience first-ever air travel

SHIVAMOGGA

Students of the Government Higher Primary School in Lingapura village of Shivamogga taluk experienced an unforgettable moment as they undertook their first-ever air journey as part of an educational tour to Bengaluru. The unique initiative has drawn widespread appreciation, highlighting how exposure-based learning can inspire students from rural backgrounds.

According to information received on Sunday, the students travelled to Bengaluru by flight and visited several important places as part of their educational itinerary. For many of these children, the journey marked their first experience of flying in an aircraft, turning the study tour into a moment of excitement and lifelong memory.

Educational tours for government school children from rural areas are usually limited to travel by bus or tempo travellers due to financial and logistical constraints. Against this backdrop, the decision to organise an air journey for students of the Lingapura school stands out as a rare and commendable effort. The trip not only broadened the students' academic exposure but also introduced them to modern modes of transport and urban infrastructure.

The children expressed immense joy and enthusiasm while sharing their experiences. Several students said that boarding an aircraft and witnessing the aerial view during the journey was thrilling and something they had only seen on television before. Teachers accompanying the students noted that such experiences play a vital role in boosting confidence, curiosity, and motivation among children, especially those from government schools in rural settings.

A heated exchange between BJP MLA Yashpal Suvarna and Speaker U.T. Khader in Assembly has triggered controversy.

BJP MLA, Assembly Speaker clash sparks political row

UDUPI

A sharp verbal exchange between Udupi BJP legislator Yashpal Suvarna and Karnataka Legislative Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader during the ongoing Assembly session has snowballed into a major political controversy, drawing widespread reactions and trolling on social media, particularly in the coastal region of the state. The incident occurred when the MLA raised a demand for government funding for the Udupi Paryaya Mahotsava, a significant religious and cultural event in the district.

During the discussion in the House, Yashpal Suvarna sought an allocation of funds for the Udupi Paryaya festival. At this point, Speaker U.T. Khader intervened sharply, asking the legislator to stop what he termed as harikatha and come directly to the point, while also remarking that members should not speak merely to appear on television. The Speaker's remarks immediately sparked criticism, with many interpreting them as dismissive and inappropriate.

Reacting strongly to the Speaker's comments, Yashpal Suvarna said that as an elected representative, he has every right to speak about issues concerning his constituency. He clarified that the question regarding funding for the Udupi Paryaya had been submitted 15 days in advance and was not raised casually. It is not right for the Speaker to criticise me from the Chair for seeking funds for Udupi Paryaya. Out of respect for the Chair, I remained silent in the House, but the Speaker's casual reference to Hindu religious discourse as 'harikatha' has deeply hurt sentiments, he said.

The BJP MLA further asserted that he had never indulged in irrelevant discussions in the Assembly and pointed out that several legislators speak at length without being interrupted. Khader knows very well that Udupi is a strong centre of Hindutva. When issues related to the development of the district and the Paryaya Mahotsava are raised, it is unfair to mock or criticise them, Suvarna said, expressing his dissatisfaction.

Feast of events planned to boost tourism during Karavali Utsava

MANGALURU

As the tourist season sets in along the Karnataka coast, the Dakshina Kannada district administration, in coordination with the Tourism Department, has unveiled an ambitious master plan to transform the region's major beaches into vibrant tourist hubs over the next two months. With a packed calendar of cultural, sports and leisure events lined up across key coastal stretches, the administration hopes to significantly boost tourist footfall during the peak season.

The initiative gains momentum with the commencement of Karavali Utsava on December 20. This year, officials say, special emphasis has been placed on giving coastal beaches royal treatment to position them as prime attractions for both domestic and outstation tourists. Backed by government funding and local-level support, the programme aims not only to cater to the existing influx of visitors but also to draw in new tourists.

From the day Karavali Utsava begins, beaches across Mangaluru will come alive with activities. Tannirbhavi Beach, Tannirbhavi Blue Flag Beach, Sasihithlu Beach, Panambur Beach, Ullal Beach and Someshwar Beach have been identified as the main venues for a series of high-energy events designed to offer a complete beachside experience.

Panambur Beach will host volleyball tournaments, sand art displays and water sports on December 20 and 21, while Tannirbhavi Beach will simultaneously feature wine and cake festivals along with cultural performances. The focus then shifts to Sasihithlu Beach on December 27 and 28, where a seafood festival, stand-up paddling, kayaking races and traditional country boat races will be held alongside cultural programmes, highlighting both adventure and local flavours.

The excitement is set to continue into the New Year. A musical evening featuring well-known singers will mark the start of January at Tannirbhavi Beach. Ullal Beach will host beach football, tug of war and a food festival on January 10 and 11, followed by an international-level kite festival at Tannirbhavi Beach on January 17 and 18.

Forest squad arrests man for attempting to sell deer skin

RIPPONPETE

A man was arrested by the Forest Flying Squad for allegedly attempting to sell deer skin near Yadehalli Cross in Ripponpete, highlighting continued efforts by forest authorities to curb wildlife-related crimes in the region. The accused was taken into custody following a swift operation based on specific intelligence inputs.

According to forest department officials, the arrest was carried out by Forest Flying Squad Police Sub-Inspector Vinayak K. along with his team. The operation took place near Yadehalli Cross, a location that has witnessed increased vigilance due to reports of illegal wildlife trade activities. Acting on information that a person was attempting to sell deer skin, the team reached the spot and apprehended the suspect.

The arrested individual has been identified as Arjun (26), a resident of Navalagunda village in Karwar district. Officials said the accused was caught red-handed while attempting to sell the deer skin, which is prohibited under wildlife protection laws. The seized deer skin has been taken into custody as material evidence for further investigation.

Following his arrest, the accused was produced before the Sagar court. The court subsequently ordered judicial custody, and further legal proceedings are underway under the relevant provisions of wildlife protection legislation. Forest officials stated that selling or possessing deer skin is a serious offence and attracts stringent punishment under the Wildlife (Protection) Act.

Members of the Forest Flying Squad who participated in the operation included R. Vishwanath, Mahesh, Chandrakant, Anjaneya Patil, Pramod Kumari, and Halesh. Officials appreciated the coordinated effort of the team, which led to the successful interception and arrest of the accused.

Forest department authorities reiterated their commitment to protecting wildlife and preventing illegal hunting and trafficking. They warned that strict action will be taken against individuals involved in wildlife crimes and urged the public to cooperate by reporting any suspicious activities related to poaching or illegal wildlife trade.

BANTWAL GANJA ARREST SEIZURE

Two arrested for attempted ganja sale in Bantwal

BANTWAL

In a significant operation against drug trafficking, Bantwal Rural Police arrested two persons who were allegedly attempting to sell ganja and seized a total of 810 grams of the banned narcotic substance. The action was taken following credible information about illegal drug activity near the national highway in Bantwal taluk.

According to police officials, the incident occurred on the evening of December 13, 2025. The Bantwal Rural Police Station received reliable intelligence that certain individuals were preparing to sell narcotic substances illegally in the Hanumanagar area of Thumbe village, located close to the national highway. Acting promptly on this information, Police Sub-Inspector Manjunath T. (Crime & Law and Order), along with his staff, proceeded to the spot to verify the inputs.

During the inspection, police noticed two individuals standing suspiciously near a deserted area beside the highway. They were found near a car bearing registration number KA-19-MN-3664 and an auto-rickshaw with registration number KA-19-AE-0166. The police detained the individuals and conducted questioning, during which they were identified as Sameer (31), a resident of Thumbe in Bantwal, and Mohammed Asif (35), a resident near Gudde in Bantwal.

Upon interrogation, the accused reportedly admitted that they were attempting to sell ganja with the intention of making quick money. A detailed search of the vehicles led to the recovery of 450 grams of ganja from the car and 360 grams from the auto-rickshaw, bringing the total quantity seized to 810 grams.

The police seized both vehicles along with the narcotic substance as part of further legal proceedings. A case has been registered at the Bantwal Rural Police Station under Crime No. 183/2025, invoking Sections 8(c) and 20(b)(ii)(a) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Further investigation is currently underway to ascertain the source of the ganja and to determine whether the accused are part of a larger drug distribution network.

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Saving energy today secures India's power tomorrow: Joshi P9

P11 McCullum admits England have been 'nowhere near' their best

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CONGRESS RALLY AGAINST 'VOTE CHORI' IN NEW DELHI

Senior Cong leaders launched a sharp attack on the Modi–Shah leadership and Election Commission, alleging large-scale 'vote chori' nationwide

NEW DELHI

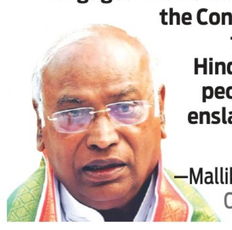
Senior Congress leaders on Sunday targeted the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah duo and the Election Commission over 'vote chori'. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi claiming that the poll body is doing the job assigned by the ruling BJP said that it should remind itself that it is India's poll body and not the Prime Minister's.

At the party's 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' rally at Ramlila Maidan, Rahul also claimed that people will throw away the "RSS government" within five minutes if there is no stealing of votes, while Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too joined him in the attack against Modi, Shah, BJP and the EC.

Priyanka said every step of the poll process arouses "suspicion" and challenged the BJP to fight an election on paper ballot, while Kharge alleged that the BJP functionaries are "gaddars" (traitors) and "dramebaaz" (indulge in theatrics), "who needed to be removed from power".

Addressing the rally after collecting over 5.5 crore signatures against 'vote chori', Rahul asserted that the Congress will fight against the "stealing" of people's rights and remove the "RSS government" using "satya and ahimsa (truth and non-violence)". He said 'vote chori' is the "biggest attack on Ambedkar's Constitution...they managed to squeeze small businessmen, implement wrong GST, demonetisation, etc. due to 'vote chori'. Mentioning the names of CEC Gyanesh Kumar and ECs Satbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi, he said the Election Commission is doing all jobs given to them by the government, which has given them legal immunity for the actions. However, he warned that the Congress will change the law with retrospective effect and take action against them.

BJP MP Sambit Patra on Sunday accused the Congress of politicising allegations of vote theft by staging its 'Vote Chor, Gaddi Chhod' rally at Ramlila Maidan against the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), despite the issue being debated in Parliament, and claimed the protest was intended to shield infiltrators.



The BJP-RSS people are engaged in efforts to finish off the Constitution. In the name of Hindutva, these people want to enslave the poor again.

—Mallikarjun Kharge, Cong president

Rally against "vote chori" to protect every citizen's right. We have collected 1.27 crore signatures from Karnataka in the campaign against vote theft. Everyone here has come to protect the voting rights of people.

—D.K. Shivakumar, K'taka DCM

We have come to protect the most sacred right granted to every citizen by our Constitution — the right to vote. The power of voting is the foundation of our democracy.

—Siddaramaiah, K'taka CM

Shamanur Shivashankarappa, veteran Cong leader, passes away

DAVANAGERE

Senior Congress leader and national president of the Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Mahasabha, Shamanur Shivashankarappa, passed away in Bengaluru on Sunday evening at the age of 94. He had been suffering from age-related ailments and was undergoing treatment at a private hospital, where he succumbed after failing to respond to medical care.

A veteran politician and respected community leader, Shivashankarappa served as a Congress MLA for several terms and played a prominent role in public life for decades. Born on June 16, 1931, in Davanagere, Shivashankarappa rose from humble beginnings to become a towering figure in Karnataka's political and social landscape. His life was marked by a commitment to community welfare, institutional building and public service, earning him widespread respect across party lines.

Shamanur Shivashankarappa, who was active in politics for several decades, was elected six times as an MLA and once as a Member of Parliament, and also served as a minister.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and several other leaders and dignitaries have expressed deep sorrow over his demise, remembering him as a dedicated leader, visionary institution builder and compassionate public figure whose contributions will be long remembered.

Notable contributions beyond politics

- President of Akhila Bharata Veerashaiva Mahasabha.
- President of Ashakirana Trust for Persons with Disabilities.
- President of Davanagere Cricket Club.
- President of Davanagere Sports Club.
- Headed Bapuji Institute of Engineering and Technology.
- Led several professional educational institutions.
- President of Bapuji Engineering Association.

B'desh summons Indian envoy over alleged anti-election activities

DHAKA

Bangladesh summoned Indian High Commissioner Pranay Verma, raising concerns over alleged anti-election activities by fugitive political figures, including former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, currently in India. Dhaka claimed that public statements by Hasina were encouraging her supporters to engage in violence aimed at disrupting Bangladesh's upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled for February 2026.

During the meeting, Bangladesh urged India to halt such activities and extradite Hasina and former Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal to face legal proceedings in Bangladesh. The interim government also alleged that other fugitive Awami League leaders residing in India were plotting violence to obstruct the electoral process. Concerns were also raised about suspects linked to the attempted assassination of Dhaka-8 independent candidate Sharif Osman Hadi potentially fleeing to India, requesting India's cooperation in their apprehension and extradition.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) reiterated that Indian territory has never been used for activities against Bangladesh's interests. India emphasized its support for free, fair, and peaceful elections in Bangladesh while placing responsibility for internal law and order in Dhaka.

CBI chargesheets 4 Chinese behind cyber crime racket

NEW DELHI

The CBI has filed a chargesheet against 17 individuals, including four Chinese nationals, and 58 companies for allegedly running a transnational cyber crime racket that siphoned off more than ₹1,000 crore through a complex network of shell firms and digital frauds, officials said on Sunday.

The racket was busted in October, after which investigators uncovered a single, well-coordinated syndicate supported by a sophisticated digital and financial infrastructure. The group is accused of operating multiple fraud schemes, including fake loan apps, bogus investment platforms, Ponzi and multi-level marketing models, fraudulent part-time job offers and online gaming scams.

According to the chargesheet, illicit funds were layered through 111 shell companies using mule bank accounts, with around ₹1,000 crore routed through these entities.

Eleven killed in shooting during Jewish event in Sydney

SYDNEY

At least 11 people were killed and several others injured on Sunday when two gunmen opened fire at a Jewish Hanukkah celebration at Bondi Beach in Sydney. Australian media reported that 29 people were wounded, including a child and two police officers, prompting a massive emergency response with the injured rushed to hospitals.

The shooting took place on the first night of the eight-day Hanukkah festival. According to the reports , the gunmen began firing around 6:30 pm (local time) as hundreds of people had gathered for the seaside event.

Police shot dead one of the attackers, while the second was arrested and remains in critical condition. Authorities said their operation was ongoing, with several suspicious items found in the area being examined by specialist units.

Dramatic footage captured by a bystander showed a person apparently tackling and disarming one of the gunmen before turning the weapon against him. The attack has sparked widespread shock and heightened security across the city.

An eyewitness said, "We heard the shots. It was shocking, it felt like 10 minutes of just bang, bang, bang. It seemed like a powerful weapon," Camilo Diaz, a 25-year-old student from Chile, told reporters.

Another witness told that he saw "two shooters in black" at the scene. "There was a shooting, two shooters in black with semi-automatic rifles," Timothy Brant-Coles told to reporters.

More on page 8

1. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has declared the shooting at Sydney's Bondi Beach a 'terrorist' attack targeting a Jewish community event.
2. New South Wales Police Commissioner Mal Lanyon declared the attack a "terrorist incident.
3. "The Albanese government was warned so many times but failed to take adequate actions to protect the Jewish community," the head of Australia's Jewish Association Robert Gregory said.

Indian Railways achieves milestone in LHB coach

NEW DELHI

Indian Railways has set a record in manufacturing German-technology LHB coaches, producing over 42,600 units between 2014 and 2025—an 18-fold increase compared to the 2,300 coaches made between 2004 and 2014. In the current financial year alone, up to November 2025, more than 4,224 LHB coaches were rolled out to enhance passenger safety. The production was led by the Integral Coach Factory (Chennai) with 1,659 coaches.

AIIMS study rules out vaccine link to sudden deaths

NEW DELHI

A year-long autopsy-based observational study by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, has found no scientific evidence connecting COVID-19 vaccination to sudden deaths among young adults, reinforcing vaccine safety. Published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research, the study analysed cases involving people aged 18 to 45 between May 2023 and April 2024. Researchers reviewed 180 sudden death cases using verbal autopsies, post-mortem imaging, conventional autopsies and histopathological examinations. The analysis revealed no statistically significant association between vaccination status and sudden deaths.

QUICK READ

Nabin appointed BJP working national prez

NEW DELHI

Bihar Cabinet Minister Nitin Nabin has been appointed as the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) working national president by the party's Parliamentary Board, making him one of the youngest leaders to hold the position. The decision was confirmed in an official statement by BJP National General Secretary Arun Singh. Nitin, son of veteran BJP leader Nabin Kishor Sinha, is a four-time MLA from Patna's Bankipur constituency and has previously served as Bihar BJP Yuva Morcha president. Known for his sharp political acumen and strong RSS background, he currently serves in the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government in Bihar. In BJP tradition, the role of working president often serves as a pathway to becoming the full-time party president.

Jharkhand to use ballot papers for local elections

RANCHI

Jharkhand will use ballot papers for municipal elections for the first time, replacing EVMs that have been in use since 2013. The State Election Commission cited a shortage of EVMs and delays in new machine production as reasons for the switch. Preparations are underway, with different coloured ballot papers designated for chairperson and ward member positions. Voters will cast votes in separate boxes, with papers printed in pink and white. Adequate ballot boxes have been arranged, and old boxes are being repaired and painted to ensure smooth polling. To save time, resources, and enhance security, the ballot papers will be printed in Ranchi instead of Kolkata, marking a historic shift in Jharkhand's municipal election process.

LEGENDS STEAL SPOTLIGHT

Messi, Sachin, and Chhetri unite for epic moments at Wankhede

MUMBAI

Lionel Messi, Sachin Tendulkar, and Sunil Chhetri came together for an unforgettable evening at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium on Sunday, December 14, creating magical moments fans will treasure. After chaos in Kolkata, the GOAT Tour regained momentum in Hyderabad and Mumbai. Crowds, present since afternoon, increased as the three legends shared the stage at various points during the event.

Messi received a roaring welcome, and the iconic Wankhede, famed for India's Cricket World Cup triumphs, matched the footballing energy. Messi thrilled the audience by strolling across the field and sending footballs flying into the stands, making the night a memorable celebration of sporting legends.

Sunil Chhetri plays exhibition match

At Wankhede Stadium, two 7v7 football matches saw Sunil Chhetri and Bengaluru FC players face a celebrity team. Chhetri scored early but was sidelined by injury. Messi later entered, interacting with players, culminating in a heartfelt embrace with Chhetri, creating an unforgettable, emotional moment for Indian football fans. Messi later gifted his 2022 World Cup jersey to Chhetri

Sachin hands Messi his World Cup 2011 jersey

Lionel Messi met Sachin Tendulkar toward the end of the event. Sachin gifted Messi his India jersey from the 2011 Cricket World Cup. Speaking to the crowd, Sachin reflected on his memories at the Wankhede Stadium and highlighted the impact Messi's presence could have on young athletes. Messi arrived in Mumbai on Sunday around noon under security measures, marking the second day of his four-city 'GOAT India Tour 2025'.

He will wind up his visit on Monday in New Delhi where he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

QUICK READ

Bike rider dies in hit and run

BENGALURU

In a tragic incident, a bike rider died on the spot after his bike rammed into a canter vehicle near Makali on NH-48 in Bengaluru. The deceased has been identified as 58-year-old Shekhar Poojary, a resident of Muneshwar Layout in Dasanapura in Bengaluru North taluk. A case has been registered at Nelamangala Traffic Police Station in connection with the incident.

Skull found on the premises of Nelamangala Govt Hospital

BENGALURU

A skull was found on the premises of the Nelamangala Government Hospital in Bengaluru Rural district. Doctors and the public at the hospital were shocked to see the skull. The skull was found in a place where hundreds of people roamed every day. The skull was found at a garbage dump adjacent to the mortuary on the premises of Nelamangala General Hospital. The skull is reported to be about four years old. How the skull came to the hospital premises remains a mystery. The AMO of the hospital informed the Nelamangala Town police and the police have started an investigation.

Wheeling hooligans in the city

BENGALURU

The menace of wheeling hooligans continues in the city. The goons were wheeling on the road at the National College metro station. Even though the bikers were passing by, they did dangerous wheeling and annoyed other motorists. Other motorists are also being harassed by the wheeling thugs and the anger against the dangerous wheelers has increased.

9,639 children abducted in 3 yrs: 71.50% girls, most cases

The statistics on child abduction cases reported in the state over the last 3 yrs

BENGALURU

Karnataka continues to fare better than many other States when it comes to overall law and order, with the police implementing firm measures to curb criminal activities. Yet, a spate of child abduction cases has deeply unsettled the State and raised serious concerns about the safety of children. These incidents underline the urgent need for heightened vigilance and collective responsibility to protect minors.

Blaming the police alone for child abduction cases would be misplaced. While law enforcement agencies play a crucial role, parents and guardians also carry a significant responsibility. Children must be closely supervised, and families need to remain alert to potential risks. Karnataka has established special child police units and designated child welfare officers in every police station to address such cases. However, tracing abducted or missing children cannot be seen as the sole duty of the police. Meaningful cooperation from parents, neighbours and the wider community is equally vital to prevent such incidents and to assist in recovery efforts.

Data released by the Home Department paints a worrying picture. Over the last three years — 2023, 2024 and up to November 15, 2025 — as many as 9,639 children have been reported abducted or missing across the State. In 2023, 3,039 such cases were recorded, followed by 3,411 cases in 2024. In 2025, till mid-November, the figure already stood at 3,189.

A particularly disturbing trend is the disproportionately high number of girls among the abducted and missing children. Of the total cases reported during these three years, around 6,891 involved girls, accounting for nearly 71.5 per cent of all child abductions. In comparison, 2,748 boys were reported missing or abducted during the same period.

Year-wise data further highlights the scale of the issue. In 2023, of the 3,039 children abducted, 2,131 were girls and 903 were boys. In 2024, the number rose to 3,411, including 2,436 girls and 975 boys. In 2025, up to November 15, 3,189 cases were reported, with 2,324 girls and 865 boys among them. The recovery rate, however, offers some reassurance. Of the boys abducted in 2023, 873 were traced, leaving 35 cases unresolved. Similarly, out of 2,131 abducted girls that year, 2,089 were found, while 42 cases remain unsolved. These figures highlight both the efforts of the police and the pressing need for stronger preventive measures and community involvement.

Police step up pre-New Year checks at pubs, restaurants

BENGALURU

With the New Year just a few days away, the Bengaluru Police are on high alert across the city. The Bengaluru Police, who are on high alert after incidents like the Delhi bomb blast and the Goa pub tragedy, conducted a late night check across the city.

In order to prevent any untoward incidents during the New Year celebrations and to put a brake on illegal activities, suspicious vehicles were stopped and sudden inspections were conducted. They also visited pubs and restaurants to gather information about the preparations for the New Year celebrations and gave necessary instructions. Senior officers personally went and supervised the inspection work.

To prevent drug use and control illegal activities during the New Year celebrations, inspections have been conducted in various parts of the city. Information is being collected on what precautionary measures have been taken in pubs and restaurants, how many people are seated, and how preparations have been made to manage the crowd, said DCP of Bengaluru North Division BS Nemagowda.

Government rejects claims of unconstitutional nominated members

BENGALURU

The opinion expressed that the government has moved to appoint more than 700 nominated members to 5 Municipal Corporations in the Greater Bengaluru area in contravention of the Constitution by the amendment proposed to Section 30 of the Greater Bengaluru Administration (Second Amendment) Bill, 2025, introduced in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly and that this process has raised doubts that elections to the said Municipal Corporations will not be held for the time being is baseless. This appears to be with a malicious intention to create a wrong impression among the public without understanding the purpose of the amendment.

> It has been stated that it is not appropriate to provide wrong information to the public at a time when the government is taking all necessary steps for the general elections of the five urban corporations of the Greater Bengaluru region.

The Greater Bengaluru Administration Act, 2024 provides for the modification of the boundaries of the Greater Bangalore area from time to time and local authorities may be included in the Greater Bengaluru area by taking steps as per the rules. Until the area so included is re-divided and elections are held, the said new area will not have any representative of the people. There is a possibility that the administration and development of the said area will be hampered as there will be no one to represent the said area in the municipal corporation of that area.

In this context, an amendment has been proposed to Section 30, providing for the nomination of at least one person per 20,000 population of a local resident of the local area to be included in the Greater Bengaluru area as an additional member of that particular municipal corporation. Since such a nominated person is not an elected representative, he shall not have the right to vote in that Municipal Corporation and only the person who conducts the election for that local area shall be allowed to continue as a nominated member.

In the event of merger of any part of a Panchayat area into a smaller urban area, provision has also been made in Section 360 (d) of the Karnataka Municipalities Act, 1964 for the Government to nominate a person who is ordinarily resident of such area as an additional councillor for the reconstituted Municipal Council.

HC scraps ₹2 lakh payout, rejects false crash claim

BENGALURU

The High Court has overturned a Rs 2- lakh compensation award to a Shivamogga man, ruling that his claim of a 2013 bike accident was based on contradictory statements and a fabricated story.

Justice Umesh M Adiga set aside a Sept 2019 award of Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT), Shivamogga, which had granted Rs 2 lakh to Raghavendra, a resident of Thirthahalli taluk, for injuries allegedly sustained in an accident on Sept 15, 2013, near Eshwara Temple, Arakere in Shivamogga district. Raghavendra had appealed against the MACT verdict, which ordered both the vehicle owner and National Insurance Company Limited to pay him, and sought Rs 28 lakh for permanent disability sustained as a pillion rider when he and the rider, Annappa, met with the accident due to another motorcyclist's rash and negligent riding.

The insurer filed a separate appeal disputing the involvement of the insured vehicle. Justice Umesh M Adiga noted that Raghavendra gave varied accounts to different medical officers. He first stated that Annappa, his brother-in-law, did not suffer injuries, then later said he sustained minor ones. At Sahyadri Narayana Hrudayalaya, the claimant stated that the accident was caused by a collision between two vehicles.

However, later at Wenlock Hospital in Mangaluru, he told the doctors that he skidded and fell. The judge recorded that the complaint was filed 86 days after the accident, with Raghavendra explaining that he delayed filing as the rider promised to cover medical expenses but failed to do soothed medical records from Wenlock Hospital reveal that the claimant reported to the medical officer that he skidded and fell from the motorcycle, a narrative deemed credible by Justice Adiga. However, the judge criticised the tribunal for not thoroughly considering the evidence, asserting that merely filing a police charge sheet does not validate the claimant's account when doubts arise. While a charge sheet typically serves as prima facie evidence, Justice Adiga noted that substantial evidence, including admissions from both the claimant and rider during cross-examination, justified scepticism regarding the charge sheet's claims.

As a result, Justice Adiga upheld the insurer's appeal, dismissed Raghavendra's contention and ordered a refund of amount deposited by insurer under the tribunal's order.

Metro Fare Panel rules out price reduction

BENGALURU

There is increasing pressure to reduce the fares of the Namma Metro. Metro passengers are demanding that the fares be reduced. However, the Metro Fare Fixing Committee has given a shock to the passengers. It has decided not to reduce the fares. In addition, BMRCL has given an important update regarding the student pass.

Since the day our metro fares were increased, there have been increasing protests demanding a reduction. However, the Metro Fare Fixing Committee has replied to the metro passengers that there will be no reduction in fares. The metro passengers had asked the fare fixing committee for suggestions and questions. The committee, which responded to this, said that a fare reduction is not possible.

Passengers have also appealed to BMRCL and the fare fixing committee to issue monthly passes for the metro. They have also demanded that passes be given to students. Monthly passes are not being issued. Single passes are not being issued to students either. Educational institutions have approached them. They have said that they will issue group passes. The committee has also clarified that discounts will not be given to the disabled and senior citizens in the metro.

Cyber trap using Ayodhya donations: Devotee loses ₹8 cr in fraud

BENGALURU

A 71-year-old Bengaluru-based businessman and ardent devotee of Lord Ram has fallen victim to a sophisticated cyber fraud, losing over ₹8 crore after being lured into a fake stock market investment scheme. The fraudsters allegedly exploited his recent financial history and religious associations to gain his trust.

The victim, Rajendra Naidu, is known for his devotion to Lord Ram and has donated generously to the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Along with his family, he had contributed silver puja items and a large bell for daily rituals at the temple. Investigators believe the fraudsters used publicly available information and targeted profiling to identify him as a high-value victim.

According to police, the accused contacted Naidu shortly after he repaid a loan taken from Reliance Capital. Posing as investment advisors, they informed him that his CIBIL score was excellent and persuaded him that investing in the stock market would generate high returns. Naidu, who runs charitable services, agreed to invest with the intention of using the profits for philanthropy.

The fraudsters falsely invoked the name of reputed financial institutions, including Reliance, to build credibility. They then asked Naidu to download a mobile application named "RARCIIpro," which closely resembled a legitimate stock trading platform.

Trusting the representations, Naidu initially transferred ₹25 lakh via RTGS to bank accounts provided by the accused. The app reflected the amount as a successful investment, reinforcing his belief that the platform was genuine. Encouraged by the apparent growth shown on the app, he continued transferring funds in phases over the following months.

By November, Naidu had transferred a total of ₹8.03 crore to multiple accounts controlled by the fraudsters. The fake app eventually displayed an inflated balance of ₹59.4 crore, prompting him to attempt a withdrawal. When the funds could not be accessed and the contacts became unreachable, he realised he had been cheated and approached the police.

A case has been registered, and cybercrime investigators are tracing the money trail and the accused, while urging citizens to verify investment platforms before transferring funds.

Four held, fake PSI among extortion gang

BENGALURU

Four people, including a fake PSI, who were posing as real police officers and extorting money by threatening them, have been arrested.

Mallikarjuna, Pramod, Vinay, Hrithik are the arrested accused. The accused had planned to enter the house and rob it by threatening it. The police have arrested four people who had threatened the person and committed the dacoity.

The incident took place in the limits of Vidyaranyapura police station. Mallikarjuna had written the exam twice to become a PSI. He failed both times. Despite this, he had passed the exam and made a show in the village that he had become a PSI. He had done a photo shoot wearing a police uniform, baton, cap and shoes. He had also given a buildup in his hometown Siraguppa that he had become a PSI in Bengaluru.

Mallikarjuna had taken a detour to live a luxurious life. For this, Mallikarjuna was accompanied by accused Hrithik, who had been observing Naveen very closely. He had told Mallikarjuna that if he broke into Naveen's house, he would get money and gold ornaments. Accordingly, the accused entered Naveen's house in a car on the 7th of this month, dressed in police uniform.

They threatened to search the house if they were selling ganja. They attacked Naveen with a stick and an iron rod. They said that they should not be arrested, that is, they should pay the money, so they stole 87 thousand from the account, 53 thousand from the wallet, and 2 thousand from the purse and fled. Naveen had filed a case in this regard at the Vidyaranyapura police station.

Police have arrested four people, including a fake PSI, in an operation. They have seized Rs 45,000 in cash and the car used in the crime. The investigation by Vidyaranyapura police is ongoing.

EGG CARCINOGEN RUMOUR

Health Dept orders egg tests amid carcinogen rumour

BENGALURU

A must-see story for egg lovers. The Health Department has come forward to address the concerns of people over the rumor that eggs are carcinogenic.

The Health Minister has instructed to test all brands of eggs in the state. In addition, a report has been received from the Food Safety Department that eggs are safe in a test conducted 6 months ago.

An issue that has been the subject of much debate for the past few days is the fact that eggs contain carcinogenic substances. People are worried and are even afraid to eat eggs. The Health and Food Safety Department has come forward to address the concerns of the people. Health Minister Dinesh Gundurao has instructed to conduct egg tests in the state.

He said that people should not panic and asked all brands to be tested.

More importantly, one should be careful about the factors that cause cancer. If there is a mistake, one will be punished. People should not get confused. People should not get worried either.

Amidst the ongoing debate over the egg rumours, an important issue has been revealed by the State Food Safety Department. An egg test was conducted 6 months ago and the report said that there was nothing harmful in the egg. Srinivas, Commissioner of the Food Safety and Drug Quality Control Department, has informed that the egg is safe.

The Food Safety Department says that the report shows that the eggs are generally safe. Meanwhile, the Health Minister has instructed the egg test. People who are worried need to wait and see what the lab report of the Health Department and the Food Safety Department will be.

QUICK READ

Four-year-old girl dies after falling while boarding bus

HASSAN

A tragic accident claimed the life of a four-year-old girl after she slipped and fell while boarding a bus in Hassan district. The incident occurred near Holalkere Gate in Arsikere taluk. The deceased has been identified as Bhargavi (4), who was travelling with her mother Yamuna to a hospital in Doddametikurke village. According to reports, Bhargavi lost her balance while getting onto the bus and fell onto the road. In the mishap, the transport bus ran over her, causing fatal injuries. She died on the spot due to the impact. Police rushed to the scene soon after the incident and carried out an inspection. The case falls under the jurisdiction of the Arsikere Rural Police Station, and further investigation is underway.

Head-on collision leaves one dead, two seriously injured

VITTAL

A tragic road accident occurred near Muliya in the Peruvai area under Vittal police jurisdiction on Sunday when a KSRTC bus collided head-on with an Omni car. The driver of the Omni car, Monappa Kulal, a resident of Mayra, was killed on the spot. Two passengers in the car, his wife Lalita and companion Ramani, sustained serious injuries and were immediately rushed to a hospital in Mangaluru by local residents. The accident happened when the Omni was traveling from Vittal towards Peruvai, while the KSRTC bus was coming from Pakalkunj towards Vittal.

The impact of the collision caused severe damage to the Omni car, leaving it completely wrecked. Vittal police arrived at the scene and have begun a detailed investigation into the incident. The accident highlights ongoing concerns about road safety on busy district routes.

Woman arrested for selling ganja on MM hills

CHAMARAJANAGAR

Police have arrested a woman for illegally selling ganja on Male Mahadeshwara Hills in Hanur taluk, Chamarajanagar district. The accused, 40-year-old Bhagy, was apprehended following credible information about her involvement in drug sales to visitors in the area. Acting under the guidance of Chamarajanagar District Police Commissioner Dr. B.T. Kavita and Kollegal Sub-Division DYSP Dhamendra, a team led by Male Mahadeshwara Hills Inspector Jagadeesh conducted a raid. During the operation, police seized 230 grams of ganja from Bhagy and registered a case against her. She has been remanded to judicial custody. The raid involved Sub-Inspector Jayaram along with personnel Siddaramayya, Ramesh, Mahesh, and Shivamoorti, ensuring swift and effective action against illegal drug activities in the region.

Ahead of Murmu's Malavalli visit, helicopter mock drill conducted

Ahead of President Droupadi Murmu's Malavalli visit, security agencies conducted a helicopter mock drill and tightened arrangements across the town

MANDYA

Preparations are in full swing in Malavalli town of Mandya district ahead of the visit of President of India Droupadi Murmu on December 16. The President is scheduled to attend the 1066th Jayanti Mahotsava of Adijagadguru Sri Shivarathri Shivayogi, being organised by Suttur Mutt from December 15. In view of the high-profile visit, elaborate security arrangements are being put in place under the supervision of central and state authorities.

As part of these preparations, officials from the Delhi-based security agencies conducted a helicopter mock drill on Sunday at a newly constructed helipad near Marehalli, on the outskirts of Malavalli. The exercise was carried out to assess readiness and ensure flawless coordination during the President's arrival. The drill demonstrated the exact landing procedures, positioning of the helicopter, and emergency response measures to be followed when the President arrives at the venue. The mock drill was conducted in the presence of a team of security officials and Mandya Deputy Commissioner Dr Kumar, who oversaw the arrangements and reviewed the preparedness on the ground. Officials practically demonstrated where and how the helicopter would land, along with related security protocols. In anticipation of the President's visit, Malavalli town has been placed under tight security following directions from central security agencies. Police deployment has been significantly increased, and strict vigilance is being maintained along the designated routes. Several precautionary measures have been implemented, including restrictions on vehicular movement, removal of footpath vendors, and enhanced monitoring of public spaces. Authorities have appealed to the public to cooperate with security personnel and adhere to the restrictions to ensure the smooth and safe conduct of the President's visit and the associated religious celebrations.

Leopard troubling villagers captured in Chikkaballapura

CHIKKABALLAPURA

A leopard that had triggered fear and sleepless nights in Haronahalli village was captured by forest officials, bringing relief to residents

Forest Department officials have successfully captured a leopard that had been disturbing the peace of villagers, bringing much-needed relief to the local community. The big cat was trapped in a cage on the night of Saturday, December 13, ending days of fear and sleepless nights for residents.

The incident occurred in Haronahalli village of Doddaballapur taluk in Bengaluru Rural district, where the leopard's movement had created panic among villagers. The animal had reportedly attacked and killed goats and dogs, heightening anxiety and forcing people to remain indoors, especially after dark. Continuous sightings and livestock losses had left the villagers worried about their safety.

Concerned over the growing threat, village leaders alerted the Forest Department. Sridhar, a local leader and former president of the Arudi Gram Panchayat, informed forest officials about the leopard's frequent movement in the area. Acting swiftly on the information, forest officials installed a cage on Saturday evening at a strategic location in the village.

Within a day of placing the trap, the leopard was successfully captured, much to the relief of the villagers. Following the capture, residents expressed happiness and gratitude to the Forest Department for their prompt action and effective response.

Forest officials said the leopard would be shifted as per standard wildlife protocols and monitored further. They also advised residents living near forest fringes to remain cautious and immediately report any wildlife sightings. The timely operation has restored a sense of safety in Haronahalli village, allowing villagers to return to their normal routines without fear.

Stay alert against cyber fraud: ACP Nazma Farooqi

MANGALURU

ACP Nazma Farooqi has urged the public to remain vigilant against cyber fraud and other modern crimes, highlighting the growing involvement of youth in criminal activities such as substance abuse, cybercrime, and sexual offenses. Speaking at the inauguration of a special human rights workshop organized by Lions International District 317 D at Shantinilaya, Balmatta, she emphasized the importance of raising awareness about legal rights, human responsibilities, and personal safety.

Farooqi warned about common digital scams, including phishing via social media, fake accounts created in someone else's name to demand money, morphing celebrities' images for fraud, fraudulent KYC and Aadhaar update requests, and schemes promising doubled returns. She stressed that victims should never share OTPs or pay money under intimidation and that reporting losses to authorities immediately, such as through the Golden Hour helpline (1930), can help recover funds.

She also urged children to avoid drugs, stressing that curiosity-driven involvement in illegal activities still constitutes a crime. Police initiatives, including random inspections in colleges, are raising awareness about substance abuse. Students were encouraged to report peers struggling with addiction so they could receive help.

The workshop included a panel discussion, Q&A sessions, and prize distribution, along with the release of a book on human rights by B.P. Achaar. Key attendees included Advocate Udayananda K., District Governor Aravind Shenai, Edwin Walter, M.H. Karunakar, B.S. Rai, K. Chandramohan Rao, Prajwal U.S., M.T. Raja, and Jyothi S. Shetty. The event aimed to equip students with knowledge of human values, cyber safety, and responsible behavior in the digital age.

Training program for high school science teachers

CHITRADURGA

A training program for government high school science teachers was conducted on Saturday at DIET Chitradurga, emphasizing the importance of fostering scientific thinking among students at the school level.

Senior lecturer Tippeeswami, speaking at the closing ceremony of the program, highlighted that teachers should adopt experiment-based activities to teach science, enabling students to grasp concepts more effectively and develop critical thinking skills from an early age. The program covered topics such as Gyanasethu, children's rights, and value education, aiming to enhance teachers' knowledge and teaching methods.

Nodal Officer Padma stressed that awareness of technical knowledge is crucial for teachers. She encouraged the use of technology in classrooms to improve students' learning outcomes and suggested that teachers guide students in using technological tools as a complementary learning resource.

The training sessions included practical demonstrations and discussions to help teachers integrate innovative teaching techniques into their daily classroom activities.

By focusing on hands-on learning and technology-supported instruction, the program sought to make science education more interactive and engaging.

Senior lecturer Gnaneshwari, lecturers S. Basavaraju, Manjula, CRP Varlakshmi, and science teachers from six surrounding taluks participated in the program.

The initiative reflects a broader effort by DIET Chitradurga to strengthen teacher capacity, improve the quality of science education, and ensure that students develop strong foundational knowledge and critical scientific thinking skills that will benefit them in higher studies and future careers.

Coffee grower assaulted and robbed; six arrested

HASSAN

Police have arrested six people, including five alleged thieves and a trader, in connection with the brutal assault and robbery of a coffee grower in Hassan district. The incident took place on December 11 in Arehalli village of Beluru taluk when the victim attempted to stop the theft of his coffee crop.

According to police, the accused attacked coffee grower Jagannath Shetty when he confronted them for stealing coffee cherries from his plantation. The assault was reportedly severe, after which the accused fled with a large quantity of stolen coffee produce. The incident occurred within the limits of the Arehalli Police Station.

The arrested persons have been identified as Shahid Mubarak (19), Zaheer (32), Sagar (21), Pajwal (21), Hajeez (22), all residents of Arehalli village, and Sunil (35), a trader. Police said Sunil had purchased the stolen coffee despite knowing that it was obtained through theft, making him an accused in the case.

Following a detailed investigation, the Arehalli police team successfully tracked down and arrested all the accused. The operation was led by Inspector Jagadeesh along with constables Shashi, Nandish, Manjunath, and other staff members.

Police officials stated that the arrests were made based on strong evidence and local intelligence. Further investigation is underway to determine whether the accused were involved in similar thefts in the region.

Farmer killed in wild elephant attack in Ramanagara

RAMANAGARA

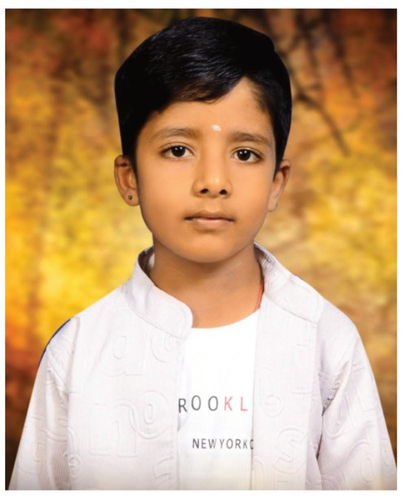
The ongoing human–wildlife conflict in Ramanagara district claimed another life on Sunday after a farmer was killed in a wild elephant attack. The tragic incident occurred in Dummasandra village of Harohalli taluk, triggering anger and concern among local residents.

The deceased has been identified as Puttamadegowda (48), a farmer from the village. According to reports, he was heading to his farmland early in the morning to let water into his fields when a wild elephant suddenly attacked him. The force of the assault proved fatal, and Puttamadegowda died on the spot, leaving his family and the entire village in shock. It is believed that the elephant had strayed from the Bannerghatta forest range and had been roaming the agricultural fields throughout the night. During its movement, the animal reportedly caused extensive damage to standing crops, particularly ragi, resulting in significant losses to farmers. The repeated movement of wild elephants in the area has heightened fear among villagers, especially those dependent on agriculture. Forest department officials rushed to the spot and conducted an inspection following the incident. However, the tragedy sparked strong resentment among villagers, who expressed anger at the Forest Department for failing to prevent such attacks. Residents questioned the effectiveness of existing measures and accused officials of negligence.

Villagers have demanded immediate compensation for the bereaved family and effective steps to prevent further elephant intrusions. Farmers in the region have voiced dissatisfaction over the Forest Department's handling of the situation, stating that wild elephant menace has become a recurring problem in the district.

SPECIAL HONOUR CONFERRED

Thanish N. to receive special honour at All India Dalit Literature Conference



KOLAR

Thanish N, an international level achiever, Grand Master, and famous as the "sardar" (leader/master) of 19 world record's, from Lakkur village, Malur taluk, Kolar district, has been selected for a "special honorary award" on the main stage of the closing ceremony of the 11th All India Dalit Literature Conference.

The conference will held on December 20-21, 2025, at the Pandit Siddarama Jambaladinne District Rangamandira in Raichur, Karnataka, under the presidency of Dr. Arjuna Golasangi, President of the State Unit of the Dalit Sahitya Parishath, Gadag, and the overall presidency of litterateur Dr. Jayadevi Gaikwad.

Grand Master Thanish N is the son of Shwethanagaraj, founder and president of Shwethanjali Bharathanatyam School and Vishwamanava Kuvempu Foundation in Lakkur village, and the young poet Lakkur M. Nagaraj. He is an achiever who amazed everyone by setting an Indian Book of World Record's at the world level at the tender age of two years and three months.

Today, seven-year-old Thanish N, who is studying in the second grade, has made 19 world record's in the field of Bharathanatyam, including Asian Book of World Records, International Book of World Records, Kid's World Records, Wheel Medal Book of World Records, Influencer World Record through the third eye in divine vision, Karnataka Achievers Record, Raba Book of World Records, Kingdom World Record, Bodhi World Record, and a Guinness record in Karate.

Thanish N., who has been recognized at the state, national, and international levels, has garnered attention through his Bharathanatyam dance performance in Malaysia.

He has appeared on the Doordarshan channel's "Chinnara Loka" program and attends many events today as a guest.

Thanish has received hundreds of awards including the Hoysala Award, Crazy Talent Award, Natya Kala Award, Grand Master Award, Natyaratna Award, Suddikirana Year's Kannadiga Award, Natya Mayura Award, Nritya Jyothi Award, Bala Natya Ratna Award, Nrityashree Award, Natyashree, and Natya Chetana.

He has been honored at many places in the state, including an honor at the Karnataka Rajyotsava, an honor from the Kannada Sahitya Parishat, honors at school and college annual days, and an honor in Malaysia.

Educate children of common people to build the nation's future: UT Khader

Speaker U.T. Khader said grassroots education that empowers ordinary children is true patriotism, speaking at Anjuman's 106th anniversary in Bhatkal

BHATKAL

Karnataka Legislative Assembly Speaker U.T. Khader on Saturday said that establishing educational institutions at the grassroots level and nurturing children of ordinary families into capable citizens is the truest form of patriotism. He was speaking as the chief guest at the 'Anjuman Day' programme organised to mark the 106th anniversary of the Anjuman Hami-e-Muslimeen Educational Institution in Bhatkal.

Khader emphasised that a strong nation is built when students grow holistically, both in classrooms and on playgrounds. Only when young minds are educated, disciplined, and physically strong, he said, can the country progress with confidence. He lauded the Anjuman institution for its long-standing service, noting that its contributions extend beyond Bhatkal to neighbouring districts and rural areas, particularly in the social, religious, educational, and healthcare sectors.

Calling upon students to aim higher, Khader urged them not to limit themselves to business alone. He encouraged them to pursue diverse professions such as engineering, medicine, law, civil services, and other fields, and to emerge as leaders who contribute meaningfully to society and nation-building.

Addressing the gathering, Minister for Fisheries, Ports, Inland Water Transport and Uttara Kannada district incharge, Mankal Vaidya, assured full government support for establishing a multi-specialty hospital and a medical college in Bhatkal. He said the region currently lacks advanced healthcare facilities and added that the government would extend support since the Anjuman institution possesses adequate land and infrastructure.

The minister also acknowledged the proposal for a law college in the area, agreeing that such an institution is necessary to meet regional educational needs. The programme was presided over by Anjuman Educational Institutions president Mohammed Yunus Kazia. Shaheen Group of Institutions chairman Abdul Qadeer and Karnataka University Vice-Chancellor Dr A.M. Khan were among those present at the event.

Kiran Shiroor receives Ambedkar Award

BHATKA

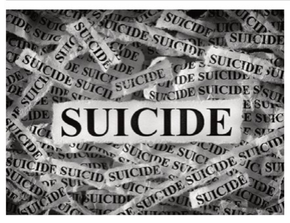
Kiran Narayana Shiroor, President of the Karnataka State SC & ST Misalathi Rakshasa Vedhika, has been honored with the Dr. Ambedkar National Award for Distinguished Service – 2025. The award was presented by the Prime Minister during the 41st National Dalit Conference held at Panchasil Jadhavgaon, Delhi.

The Bharatiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi recognized Shiroor for his tireless fight against casteism, inequality, and social injustice.

Over the years, he has actively worked to protect the rights of SC-ST communities and empower neglected and backward groups. His dedication to social causes and advocacy for marginalized communities earned him this prestigious national-level recognition. During the ceremony, the award was formally presented by former Union Minister Dr. Satyanarayana Jatiya and Dalit Sahitya Akademi National President Dr. Sumanakshar. Shiroor's work spans multiple social fields, including promoting education, equality, and the welfare of exploited communities.

Recipients and organizers praised Shiroor's unwavering commitment, calling him an inspiration for social justice activists across India. Attendees highlighted that the award symbolizes not just personal achievement but also the ongoing struggle for equality and empowerment of marginalized sections of society. Shiroor expressed gratitude and reaffirmed his dedication to continuing efforts to fight discrimination and uphold the rights of all oppressed communities.

QUICK READ



Nursing student commits suicide in Chamarajanagar

CHAMARAJANAGAR

In a tragic incident in Hosahampapura village of Kollegala taluk, a nursing student, identified as Priyanka, took her own life after being unable to bear severe abdominal pain. Priyanka was in her final year of nursing studies and reportedly struggled with intense stomach discomfort. Overwhelmed by her condition, she allegedly resorted to suicide. The incident has shocked the local community, highlighting the need for mental health awareness and support for students facing physical and emotional distress. Authorities are investigating the case to confirm the circumstances surrounding her death and to provide necessary support to her family.

Protest demands Chikkodi as separate district

CHIKKODI

A large protest demanding the creation of Chikkodi as a separate district is ongoing in Chikkodi town, led by Shivaprasada Swamiji and local villagers. Students from CLE Institute blocked the road at Basava Circle, forming a human chain to press their demand.

A petition urging the government to declare Chikkodi a district was submitted to the Chief Minister by the Tahsildar. Offices across the town have been closed in support of the protest, with warnings that more closures could halt district administration entirely. Swamiji emphasized the importance of recognizing Chikkodi as a full-fledged district to ensure proper governance and development.

Bommai urges cooperation for Bedti-Varda river project

HAVERI

Former Chief Minister and MP Basavaraj Bommai has urged the public not to oppose the Bedti-Varda river linking project based on misconceptions, emphasizing that the initiative aims solely to ensure proper water utilization for drought-prone regions. Speaking to the media in Haveri, Bommai clarified that the revised project will only use about 10% of the river's flow and will not disrupt the natural water course. He appealed for support, stressing that the plan is carefully designed to benefit farmers and communities facing water scarcity.

Former CM Basavaraj Bommai urges support for the Bedti-Varda river linking project, assuring minimal impact and benefits for drought-affected Haveri region.

Bommai said that discussions on the Bedti-Varda project were recently held under the guidance of Param Pujya Swarnavalli, respecting the sentiments of local spiritual leaders while addressing concerns raised by critics. He emphasized that the project has been in planning for nearly 30 years and has been approved by the National Water Development Authority. It is one of the three major water development initiatives in South India, and opposition based on misinformation should be avoided. The project has been redesigned with small barrages and lift irrigation systems to ensure minimal impact. Only a fraction of the river's water will be diverted, and environmental and DPR studies are in place to assess its effects. Bommai highlighted the importance of cooperation from locals to implement the project successfully. The initiative aims to provide a reliable water supply for drought-affected areas in Haveri and nearby districts, ensuring drinking water availability and irrigation support during dry seasons.

Bommai stressed that once full details and expert assessments are available, any further decisions will be made responsibly, ensuring the sustainable and equitable use of water resources for the region's development.

Children raise local issues at Agrahara village rights meeting

TUMAKURU

In Agrahara village, a children's rights meeting was organized at the Agraharadamma Temple community hall, where students actively voiced their concerns regarding local facilities and their needs. The children highlighted several issues, including the lack of regular computer classes for skill development, clean drinking water, proper playgrounds, literacy classrooms, sports equipment, school classroom conditions, compound repairs, and poor sanitation facilities.The program was conducted under the guidance of the NGO Navadisha's Program Associate C.M.S. Gowdamatnadi to encourage children's participation in Panchayat Raj governance and ensure their voices are heard regarding basic amenities, protection, and welfare. Officials and local representatives attended the meeting to discuss possible solutions and actions to address the problems raised by the children.Key participants included Village Panchayat President K.L. Ganganna, Vice-President Geetha Govindaraju, PDLO Lokesh, Chiguru Yuvajana Sangha President Amalgondi Manjunath, representatives from the Women and Child Welfare Department.

Kharge calls Aland vote fraud revelation a major breakthrough

BENGALURU

Karnataka Rural Development Minister Priyank Kharge has welcomed the chargesheet filed against a former BJP MLA and his son for their alleged involvement in vote manipulation in the Aland Assembly constituency. Kharge stated that despite repeated obstruction by the Election Commission, the state Special Investigation Team (SIT) has finally revealed the truth behind the alleged fraud.

In a post on X, Kharge accused the BJP of orchestrating the deletion of 5,994 voters in Aland using forged logins, fake SIM cards, and fraudulent OTP platforms, calling it a full-fledged "vote chori factory." He claimed that the operation valued each voter's right at just Rs. 80, reflecting the party's disregard for democratic principles. Kharge vowed to continue exposing such fraudulent operations and hold the perpetrators accountable.

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar also affirmed that vote theft in Aland was genuine and highlighted that the SIT's investigation had uncovered substantial evidence, including deleted phone records. He said a charge sheet had been filed against former BJP MLA Subhash Guttedar and noted that Congress MLAs would raise the matter in the Assembly session.

Document writers plan protest over job security concerns

NAVALGUND

Members of the Taluka Kudstu Barahgara Sangha (Tadu Writers Association) staged a two-day strike in front of the Navalgund Tahsildar's office, demanding government intervention to protect their profession.

Narasimha Hainamati, a documentary writer, said there are around 16,000 such professionals in Karnataka, but recent government policies have left them without job security. "Documentary writers are facing difficulties, and we urge the government to support those who are dedicating their lives to this work," he said. The association has announced a statewide protest on December 16 in front of Suvarna Sauda in Belagavi to highlight their demands and draw government attention. The strike comes amid growing concerns over digitalization, which has drastically reduced the need for traditional letter and document writing, leaving many without work. PLD Bank Chairman Devaraj Da Dibhavi visited the site and expressed anger over the government's inaction.

Documentary writers in Navalgund staged a two-day strike outside the Tahsildar's office, seeking government support amid job losses caused by digitalisation. Leaders said about 16,000 writers statewide lack security. The association announced a statewide protest on December 16 at Suvarna Sauda, Belagavi, to demand policies protecting traditional livelihoods and employment.

"Digital records have disrupted the livelihoods of letter writers. Their cries are going unheard despite their sacrifices," he said. Local Taluk unit leaders, including S.A. Ajagonda, Mallika Rjuna Sanganagoud, H.K. Kulakarni, R.K. Naragundakar, D.K. Kulakarni, S.P. Deshatti, and others, joined the protest, emphasizing the need for urgent measures to safeguard jobs and livelihoods in the profession. The documentary writers' strike reflects growing tensions between traditional professions and digital reforms, underscoring the need for policies that balance technological progress with protection for workers.

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Phone No.: 022-66211000, **Website:** www.manappuramhomefin.com

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of **Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN")** under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic** possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 of the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower and Co-borrower / Loan account number/ Branch	Description Of Secured Asset In Respect Of Which Interest Has Been Created	Date of Demand Notice sent & Outstanding Amount	Date of Possession
1	Ummarabi Ibrahimsab Ugrani, Moulali Ibrahimsab Ugrani, Salmansab Pirwale, **/MHL00260047839/** Hubli	Residential Gramthana Property Bearing Vpc No.1110, Property No.152701100300120631, Measuring Total Measuring 162.000000Sq Mtr, Situated At Kiravatti Village, Tq: Yallapur & Dist: Uttar Kannada, Karnataka - 581412. East- House of Mariyambi Husensab Mujavar, West-Property of Umarabi Ibrahimsab Ugrani, South-Govt. Road, North-Property of Giragol	20-09-2025 & Rs.534187/-	11-12-2025
2	Sadhik Pasha V, Vajid Pasha B, Riyanaa Bhanu S, **/NHL00340008781/** Mysore	All That Piece And Parcel of The Property Bearing No.128/128, Ward No.05, Pl.D. No.152200300109101476, Situated At Saligrama Village, Saligrama Gramapanchayath, Krishnarajanagara Taluk, Mysuru District, Karnataka - 571604. Measuring East To West 9.144 Meters And North To South 5.4864 Meters, Total Measuring 50.17 Meters. East-Conservancy, West-Road, South-Own House, North-House Belong To Showkath Pasha	20-09-2025 & Rs.696657/-	11-12-2025
3	Sathish K, Jyothi H, Sharath Kumar, **/NHL00340008924/** Mysore	All That Pieces And Parcel of Property Bearing Junjer No.1365/85/2, Pl.D.No.152200701705502989, Situated At S.K.P. Agrahara Village, Sosale Gram Panchayath, T. Narasipura Taluk And Mysuru District, Karnataka - 571120. Measuring East To West 4.572 Meters And North To South 12.192 Meters, Total Measuring 55.74 Square Meters. East-House Belongs To Mahadevamma W/O Gare Subbalah., West-Site Belongs To Shivamurthy S/O Maadhu., South-Road., North-Road.	13-09-2025 Rs.407636/-	11-12-2025

Date: 15th December 2025 | Place: KARNATAKA **Sd/- Authorised Officer Manappuram Home Finance Ltd**

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NAME CHANGE
I, **MOHAMAD ALI** , S/o, Gouspasha, Resident of No, 030,Ullerahalli Village Tekal Hobli Malur Taluk Kolar Dist,563137, have changed my name to **MOHAMMED ALI** , vide affidavit dated: 14.12.2025 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

IN THE COURT OF THE PRINCIPAL CIVIL JUDGE AND JMFC AT DEVANAHALLI
CMis No. 144/2024
Petitioner: 1) Sri.Munishamappa S/o Chikkachikkanna Aged about 95 years, **2. Devaraju** S/o Munishamappa Aged about 51 years. Both are R/at Chikkanahalli Village, Vijayapura Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District. V/s
Respondent: Registrar of Birth and death The Tahshildar Devanahalli Taluk. Devanahalli.
PUBLIC NOTICE
Whereas the Petitioners have filed the above petition under Section 13 (3) And 14 Of Registration of Births And Deaths Act, 1969 for seeking the death certificate of the mother of 1st petitioner and grandmother of 2nd petitioner by name LATE LAKKAMMA W/O LATE CHIKKACHIKKANNA who died on 28.11.2004 at Chikkanahalli Village, Vijayapura Hobli, Devanahalli Taluk, Bengaluru Rural District.
In this regard it is hereby notice that whoever has interested in the said matter may appear in person or through an advocate duly authorized before the above said court on 29.01.2026 In default this matter will be heard and disposed off an ex-parte order.
Given under my hand and seal of the court on the 9th day of December 2025.
By order of the court
Chief Ministrial Officer, Civil Judge & JMFC Court, Devanahalli
Advocate: **Pranav Samrud**, Court Road, Doddaballapur Town.

NAME CHANGE
I, **GULNAJ** , W/o. Mohammed Arif, Resident of No 317, 2nd Floor 15th Cross Kareem Sab Layout Srigandha Nagar Hegganahalli Bengaluru Dist, 560091, have changed my name to **GULNAZ** , vide affidavit dated: 14.12.2025 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE
I, **SUSHMITHA**, D/o. Sangamesh Muttappanavar, resident of at No. 8, 4th Main, 2nd Cross, Venkateshappa Layout, Sanjaymagar, RMV Extn 2nd Stage, Bangalore 560094, have changed my name to **SUSHMITA SAGAMESH MUTTAPPANAVAR**, Vide Affidavit Dated: 12.12.2025 before notary MEER HASSAN, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, MANMOHAN KAUR AJITH D/o RAGHBIR SINGH, R/o Vspl Gardenia No 118, Flat No A401, Pemmegowda Road, Marappa Garden, Benson Town, Bangalore North, Bengaluru, Karnataka-560046, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MNMOHAN KAUR.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, THASMIYA ZAIN Z W/o ZINUDEEN Y, R/o Flat No 701, 7th Floor, E Block, Salarpuria Sattva East Crest Apartment, Budigere Cross Old Madras Road, VTC Konadasapura,Virgo Nagar, Bangalore South, Bengaluru-60049, Karnataka, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as THASMIYA THABASUM J.

TERMORS IN DAVANAGERE

Strong tremors shake villages, residents panic

DAVANAGERE

Villages along the borders of Jagaluru, Kudligi, and Challakere talukas in Davanagere district were shaken by a strong earthquake on Saturday evening, leaving residents frightened and anxious.

The tremors struck around 7:30 pm, accompanied by a loud rumbling noise that rattled houses and sent villagers rushing outdoors. People, including children and the elderly, spent hours outside their homes in fear, returning only around 9 pm as the night grew cold. Several villages reported the quake's impact, including Chikkamallanhole in Jagaluru taluk, Mudalma Chikere, Dibbadahalli, Siddamma Nahalli, Kullalli in Kudligi taluk, and Tare Kolamma Nahalli in Challakere taluk. Residents described shaking homes, falling utensils, and a sudden loud "dham" sound that startled everyone.

Chiramji, a farmer from Chikkamallanhole, said, "We felt the ground moving, and a loud noise made plates and glasses fall in many homes. It was frightening." Many villagers remained cautious even after the tremors subsided, reflecting the fear such events generate in rural communities.

Authorities have urged calm while assessing the situation and inspecting buildings for any damage. No injuries or major structural damage have been reported so far.

The incident highlights the need for increased awareness and preparedness in areas prone to seismic activity. Residents are being advised to follow safety measures during such events, including staying away from unstable structures and keeping emergency supplies ready.

Experts are monitoring the region for any aftershocks and will provide guidance if further tremors occur, ensuring that villagers can stay safe while normal life gradually resumes.

QUICK READ

Delhi chokes as AQI breaches 450; GRAP-4 kick in across NCR

New Delhi

As stricter pollution norms under the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stage 4 came into force, emergency curbs were triggered across Delhi on Sunday as the city's air quality continued to deteriorate. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM), the Centre's anti-pollution panel, first invoked restrictions under GRAP-3 for Delhi and adjoining areas and escalated them to GRAP-4 later the same evening after observing a sharp worsening of air quality. Shortly after the decision, Delhi's Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 431 at around 4 p.m. and further climbed to 441 by 6 p.m.

Oppn should learn from Bihar's SIR process: Dilip Jaiswal

New Delhi

The Congress party's rally at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on Sunday over alleged 'vote chori', BJP leaders rejected the charges and questioned the intent and scale of the protest, with Bihar Minister Dilip Jaiswal suggesting that the opposition leaders should learn from Bihar's SIR process. Reacting to the Congress rally, Jaiswal defended the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process and cited Bihar as a successful example. The SIR process was first introduced in the country in Bihar, focusing on the revision of the donor list. In Bihar, more than a crore donors fully supported SIR and the proper updating of the list. Once the SIR process was completed in Bihar, there was a record turnout, and donors openly contributed.

NHRC takes notice of 'proxy governance'

New Delhi

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has said it has taken serious cognisance of the continuing and widespread practice of proxy governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), particularly in constituencies reserved for women. The issue stems from a complaint filed by Sushil Verma, former Member of the Haryana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, which was examined by a bench of the Commission headed by NHRC Member Priyank Kanoongo on December 12.

Eknath Shinde visits RSS headquarters and Dikshabhumi

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde paid homage at RSS headquarters and Dikshabhumi, highlighting unity, service, and values.

NAGPUR

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, accompanied by Shiv Sena ministers and legislators, on Sunday visited the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) headquarters at Reshimbagh and the revered Dikshabhumi in Nagpur, paying tribute to two influential institutions that have shaped Maharashtra's socio-political and cultural landscape. The visits underscored the dual legacies of nationalist service and social justice that continue to influence public life in the state.

At the RSS headquarters in Reshimbagh, Shinde paid respects at the Dr Hedgewar Smruti Mandir and interacted with reporters thereafter. Praising the organisation's century-long contribution to nation-building, he said that every activist experiences a deep sense of patriotism and national love upon arriving at Reshimbagh. According to him, the environment inspires volunteers to dedicate themselves to social service and national service with commitment and discipline.

Shinde highlighted the organisational strength of the RSS, noting that its network of branches functions not only across India but also globally. He said the guidance of RSS chief Dr Mohan Bhagwat continues to inspire volunteers, providing them with moral strength and direction in their social and national work. Referring to Nagpur's historical importance, Shinde remarked that the city is not only Maharashtra's sub-capital but also the birthplace of the RSS, founded a hundred years ago by Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar.

Emphasising the inclusive philosophy of the organisation, Shinde said that volunteers coming to Reshimbagh rise above divisions of caste, language, and region, dedicating themselves to the nation with a spirit of selfless service. He described it as a historical achievement that an organisation has worked continuously for a hundred years without seeking fame or personal gain. Drawing a parallel with the Shiv Sena, he added that RSS workers, like Sena cadres, step forward selflessly during disasters and crises, guided by values of community service and patriotism.

TN BJP chief to meet Amit Shah amid alliance talks

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu BJP president Nainar Nagenthran will meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Sunday, amid renewed political churn over alliance equations in Tamil Nadu ahead of the 2026 Assembly elections.

Nagenthran's Delhi visit comes in the immediate backdrop of a key development within the AIADMK. At its recent General Council meeting, the party passed a resolution authorising general secretary and former Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami (EPS) to take the final call on alliance partners for future elections.

Shortly after the resolution was adopted, Nagenthran met Palaniswami at the latter's residence in Chennai, fuelling speculation of renewed coordination between the BJP and the AIADMK. Following the Chennai meeting, Nagenthran travelled by flight to the national capital.

Earlier, speaking to the media in Tamil Nadu, he said his visit to Delhi was to attend a function marking the release of a commemorative postal stamp in honour of Perumbidugu Mutharaiyar, a historic Tamil ruler. However, the political significance of the visit sharpened after he held discussions with Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

In a post on the social media platform X, Nagenthran said he met Sitharaman during what he described as a pilgrimage visit and submitted several petitions and representations he had received from the public during his recent outreach programmes across Tamil Nadu.

CBI dismantles major transnational cyber fraud network

NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has dismantled a large and well-organised transnational cyber fraud network and filed a charge sheet against 17 accused persons, including four foreign nationals, and 58 companies, officials said on Sunday. The action follows an extensive investigation that uncovered a sophisticated digital and financial infrastructure used to cheat thousands of citizens across multiple states in India.

According to a CBI press release dated December 14, the accused were involved in running misleading loan applications, fake investment schemes, Ponzi and multi-level marketing (MLM) models, bogus part-time job offers and fraudulent online gaming platforms. The investigation has revealed how a single coordinated syndicate created an extensive digital and financial infrastructure to defraud thousands of unsuspecting citizens, the agency said. The case was registered based on inputs received from the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, which indicated that large numbers of people were being cheated through online investment and employment schemes.

Although the complaints initially appeared to be isolated incidents, the CBI said detailed analysis revealed striking similarities in applications used, fund-flow patterns, payment gateways and digital footprints, pointing towards a common organised conspiracy.

The CBI further stated that the cyber criminals adopted a highly layered and technology-driven modus operandi, using Google advertisements, bulk SMS campaigns, SIM-box-based messaging systems, cloud infrastructure, fintech platforms and multiple mule bank accounts. Each stage of the operation from luring victims to collection and movement of funds was deliberately structured to conceal the identities of the actual controllers and evade detection by law enforcement agencies, the release said.

Investigators uncovered the backbone of the fraud network, comprising 111 shell companies incorporated with dummy directors, forged or misleading documents, fake addresses, and false business objectives.

Indian Army steps up connectivity restoration in Sri Lanka

NEW DELHI

Under Operation Sagar Bandhu, the Indian Army has intensified efforts to restore critical connectivity in Sri Lanka following the devastation caused by Cyclone Ditwah. An Engineer Task Force of the Indian Army, working in close coordination with the Sri Lankan Army and the Sri Lankan Road Development Authority, has commenced preparatory work at the Chilaw and Kilinochchi bridge sites in Jaffna for the launching of Bailey bridges.

Providing an update on the operation, the Indian Army said preparations are underway for the launch of a Bailey bridge to restore road connectivity in the affected region.

Earlier on Friday, as part of Operation Sagar Bandhu, which was launched to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of Sri Lanka affected by Cyclone Ditwah, an Engineer Task Force of the Indian Army was airlifted and inducted on a war footing to deliver critical engineering support.

The primary focus of the task force, comprising 48 personnel, is the restoration of vital lines of communication, including the repair and construction of damaged roads and bridges.

The team includes specialised bridging experts, surveyors and watermanship specialists, along with personnel trained in operating heavy earth-moving equipment, drones and unmanned systems. This combination enables precise, rapid and effective engineering support in challenging terrain and weather conditions.

The Engineer Task Force is currently holding four sets of Bailey bridges, which were airlifted by C-17 aircraft of the Indian Air Force to support the restoration of disrupted connectivity. In addition, the team is equipped with pneumatic boats, outboard motors, HESCO bags and new-generation equipment such as heavy-payload drones and remotely controlled boats to enhance operational capability. Meanwhile, the Indian Army's field hospital established in Mahiyanganaya near Kandy is being wound up as local medical services return to normal.

BJP victory in Thiruvananthapuram boosts party confidence: MP

INDORE

Buoyed by the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) significant victory in the Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation elections, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Sunday expressed strong confidence that the party would continue to expand its footprint in Kerala. Describing the outcome as a turning point in the state's political history, Yadav said the result reflected a growing acceptance of the BJP's ideology and governance model among voters in the southern state.

The BJP's win is being viewed as historic, as the party managed to wrest control of the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation from the Communist Party of India (Marxist), ending a 45-year-long dominance of the Left in the civic body. Kerala's capital city has traditionally been a stronghold of the Left, and the shift is seen as a major political breakthrough for the BJP in a state largely known for its left-of-centre political orientation.

The victory comes just a year after the BJP secured its first-ever Member of Parliament from Kerala, a milestone that had already signalled a gradual but notable change in the state's political landscape. Kerala politics has long been dominated by two major alliances — the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) and the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF). Against this backdrop, the BJP's growing electoral success is being closely watched by political observers.

Mohan Yadav said the Thiruvananthapuram result demonstrated that people in Kerala are increasingly receptive to alternative political narratives focused on development, governance, and nationalism. He added that the BJP's organisational strength, grassroots outreach, and consistent engagement with voters were beginning to yield results, even in regions where the party was once considered marginal.

ECI issues transparency guidelines for SIR hearings

KOLKATA

With the phase of hearing on claims and objections under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in West Bengal set to begin after the publication of the draft voters' list on December 16, the Election Commission of India (ECI) has issued detailed instructions to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) to ensure strict compliance with security and procedural norms. The Commission has emphasised that any irregularity or breach of security during the hearing process must be taken seriously and addressed without delay.

Election Commission has laid down firm security, venue and transparency instructions ahead of claims and objections hearings in West Bengal.

Sources within the CEO's office said the ECI has, at this stage, decided against the routine deployment of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) for security during the hearing sessions. Instead, the Commission has chosen to rely on the state police machinery to maintain law and order and ensure a secure environment for the proceedings. However, the ECI has made it clear that this approach is conditional and subject to strict monitoring.

According to insiders, if any breach of security occurs during the hearings—whether due to negligence, oversight, or deliberate action by the state police personnel deputed at the venues—the CEO's office is required to immediately report the matter to the Commission. Based on such reports, the ECI will decide the next course of action, which could include changes in security arrangements or stricter interventions.

The Commission has also issued a strong warning to electoral officials involved in conducting the hearings. The CEO's office has been instructed to clearly communicate to all concerned Electoral Officers that any deliberate irregularity or deviation from established procedures during the hearing process will invite strict disciplinary action under existing legal provisions. The ECI has underlined that accountability and neutrality are non-negotiable in the revision exercise.

Water storage in TN's Cauvery delta tanks increases

CHENNAI

Copious rainfall during the northeast monsoon and sustained inflows in the Cauvery river system have significantly improved water storage across irrigation tanks in the Cauvery delta, offering major relief to farmers ahead of the peak agricultural season.

Of the 764 irrigation tanks in the delta region, 386 have now reached full capacity, a sharp rise from just 42 tanks recorded three months ago. In addition, 329 tanks have filled beyond 75 per cent of their capacity, underscoring the extent of the recovery in water availability across the agrarian heartland of Tamil Nadu.

The delta districts of Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Mayiladuthurai and Pudukkottai together account for 737 system tanks fed by rivers and canals, in addition to rainwater, along with 27 non-system tanks dependent entirely on rainfall.

Thanjavur district has the highest concentration of irrigation tanks at 561, followed by Pudukkottai with 170. Tiruvarur has 28 tanks, while Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai have three and two tanks, respectively.

A majority of these tanks are located in tail-end areas and play a crucial role in supporting paddy cultivation, particularly during the samba season.

Typically, these tanks receive substantial inflows during September and October. However, this year saw an early rise in storage levels, with many tanks crossing the 50 per cent mark by the end of August itself. This was largely due to the continuous flow of water in key channels such as the Grand Anaicut and Vennaru, coupled with the timely release of Cauvery water from the Mettur dam on the customary date of June 12. Since then, the Mettur reservoir has reached full storage level on seven occasions, aided by surplus releases from Karnataka.

Adequate rainfall during the southwest monsoon in Thanjavur district, followed by above-normal rainfall during the northeast monsoon between October 1 and December 11, further strengthened water availability across the delta.

CHHATTISGARH WINTER SESSION BEGINS

Chhattisgarh Assembly winter session begins in new building

RAIPUR

The Winter Session 2025 of the Chhattisgarh Legislative Assembly commenced on Sunday in Nava Raipur, marking a historic shift as proceedings moved to the newly constructed Assembly building for the first time. The four-day session, scheduled to continue until December 17, has drawn attention not only for its new venue but also for its complete transition to a paperless format, reflecting the state legislature's push towards digital governance.

However, the opening day was overshadowed by the main opposition Congress boycotting the session's first sitting. With Congress legislators absent, the inaugural proceedings saw participation only from members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). The first day was devoted to a special discussion on Chhattisgarh Vision 2047, aligning with the broader national narrative of Developed India 2047. Due to the special nature of the discussion and the boycott, no Question Hour was scheduled on Sunday.

The debate on Vision 2047 focused on long-term development goals, infrastructure expansion, economic growth, social welfare, and governance reforms aimed at positioning Chhattisgarh as a key contributor to India's centenary development vision. BJP legislators initiated the discussion, outlining priorities and proposed strategies for the state's future, while the absence of Congress voices was visibly felt in the House.

Despite the boycott, the session is expected to witness intense legislative activity over the coming days. Members of the Legislative Assembly have submitted a total of 628 questions for the session, including 333 starred and 295 unstarred questions. Significantly, about 96 per cent of these questions were submitted online, highlighting the Assembly's successful adoption of digital processes in its new premises.

In addition, 48 calling attention motions and nine private member resolutions have been listed, indicating that ministers will face detailed questioning and scrutiny.

QUICK READ

Thailand launches new offensive against Cambodia

Bangkok

Thailand's military has launched a new offensive against Cambodia to reclaim sovereign territory, spurning mediation efforts including that of United States President Donald Trump. Violence between the two Southeast Asian nations continued on Sunday, a day after Phnom Penh announced that it was shutting all of its crossings with Thailand, its northern neighbour. The conflict stems from a long-running dispute over the colonial-era demarcation of their 800km (500-mile) shared border. Fighting has left at least 25 soldiers and civilians dead and displaced over half a million people on both sides.

Fishermen hurt, boat damaged in China coastguard skirmish

Manila

The Philippines has accused Chinese coastguard ships of firing water cannon at Filipino fishermen near a disputed South China Sea shoal, injuring three people and causing significant damage to two fishing vessels. The Philippine coastguard (PCG) said that nearly two dozen Filipino fishing boats were attacked a day earlier, near an atoll called the Sabina Shoal that falls within the country's 200km (124-mile) Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The fishermen faced high-pressure spray from Chinese water cannon, and Chinese vessels attempted aggressive blocking manoeuvres, according to Manila.

Special teams and investigators deployed across England

London

Specialist investigation teams for rape and sexual offences are to be created across England and Wales as the home secretary declares violence against women and girls a national emergency. Shabana Mahmood said the dedicated units will be in place across every force by 2029 as part of Labour's violence against women and girls (VAWG) strategy due to be launched later this week. The use of Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPOs), which had been trialled in several areas, will also be rolled out across England and Wales. They are designed to target abusers by imposing curfews, electronic tags and exclusion zones.

2 students killed and 9 injured in Brown University shooting

Brown University remained under lockdown after a campus shooting killed two students and injured nine others.

RHODE ISLAND

More than 400 law enforcement personnel were deployed across Providence, Rhode Island, as authorities launched an extensive manhunt following a deadly shooting at Brown University that left two students dead and nine others injured. The incident occurred when an armed suspect entered an academic building during examination hours, triggering panic at the Ivy League institution and prompting an immediate lockdown.

According to officials, the suspect entered the Barus & Holley engineering building, where students were taking exams and outer doors had been unlocked. The gunman opened fire inside a classroom before fleeing the scene. Investigators are still trying to determine why the particular location was targeted, Providence Police Chief Oscar Perez said during a news conference.

Providence Mayor Brett Smiley said that authorities do not believe there is any specific, ongoing threat to the public. However, due to the scale of the search operation and the fact that the suspect remains at large, a shelter-in-place order for the campus and surrounding neighbourhoods continues to remain in effect. The shelter-in-place allows law enforcement to do their work in the first phase of the investigation, Smiley said.

The university campus and nearby streets were flooded with emergency vehicles as security was heightened across the city. Local and state police are being assisted by federal agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Authorities said the suspect has not yet been identified.

Police released a surveillance video showing a male suspect, believed to be in his 30s and dressed in black. Providence Deputy Police Chief Timothy O'Hara said the individual may have been wearing a mask, though this has not been confirmed.

Congressman Thanedar calls for stronger India–US ties

DETROIT

Indian American Congressman Shri Thanedar advocated stronger India–US ties, expanded immigration pathways, and greater Indian American civic participation.

Indian American Congressman Shri Thanedar has made a strong pitch for deepening India–United States relations, expanding immigration opportunities, and enhancing political engagement by Indian Americans, describing the bilateral partnership as mutually beneficial and strategically vital. He was delivering the keynote address at the inaugural India Abroad Dialogue held in Detroit, widely known as the automobile capital of the world.

Addressing a gathering of eminent community leaders, Thanedar emphasised that a strong India–America relationship rests on strategic, economic, and people-to-people foundations. A strong India-America relationship is beneficial to both countries, he said, highlighting how collaboration between the world's largest democracies can drive global stability, innovation, and prosperity.

Representing Michigan's 13th Congressional District, Thanedar praised Indian immigrants for their significant contributions to the US economy, particularly in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and entrepreneurship. He noted that these skills are critical to strengthening America's economic base and sustaining its technological leadership. According to him, the Indian American community's role is directly linked to the country's competitiveness in emerging industries and advanced manufacturing.

Thanedar also thanked India Abroad for launching the 10-city national dialogue series aimed at fostering engagement between policymakers and the Indian American diaspora. Give yourselves a round of applause, he told the organisers, acknowledging the effort to create a structured national platform for dialogue and discussion.

The India Abroad Dialogue, which began in Detroit, is being conducted in partnership with the Foundation of India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIIDS) and several other community organisations. As part of the nationwide outreach, similar events will be held in 10 cities across the United States. The next dialogue, scheduled in Chicago, is expected to feature Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi and prominent Indian American physician and community leader Dr. Bharat Barai.

N. Korea completes building 2nd modern regional hospital

SEOUL

North Korea has built its second modern regional hospital as part of leader Kim Jong-un's push to expand medical facilities nationwide to improve public health services, state media reported on Sunday. Kim attended the inaugural ceremony of the Kusong City Hospital in North Phyongan Province to tour the facility.

The hospital follows the opening of the Kangdong County Hospital on the outskirts of Pyongyang last month. Calling the Kusong facility another precious creation, Kim said it reflects the ruling party's determination to strengthen regional areas and advance public health across the country. He also described 2025 as the first year of the public health revolution.

At a plenary meeting last week, the Workers' Party of Korea announced plans to build modern hospitals simultaneously in 20 cities and counties starting next year, based on experience gained from this year's pilot projects.

During the ceremony, Kim reaffirmed his commitment to building modern hospitals across the country to lay a solid foundation for North Korea's public health system.

Describing the Kusong hospital as a model for modernising public health, Kim said it should serve as an example for the development of regional health services through its operation.

He also stressed the need to overhaul the state medical education system, improve the quality of medical workers, and ensure the proper management and operation of modern medical facilities and equipment.

Afghan police intensified anti-narcotics operations, seizing opium and arresting dozens of suspected drug smugglers across multiple provinces.

Afghan police seize opium, arrest multiple suspects

KABUL

Police in western Afghanistan's Herat province have seized 16 kilograms of opium and detained two alleged drug smugglers, as authorities continue an intensified crackdown on narcotics production and trafficking across the country. A provincial police official said on Sunday that the arrests were made during a targeted operation carried out a day earlier.

According to the official, the suspects had concealed the opium inside secret compartments of a vehicle and were attempting to transport the contraband out of Herat province. Acting on intelligence inputs, police intercepted the vehicle and conducted a thorough search, during which the drugs were discovered. The vehicle owners were immediately taken into custody, and further investigations are underway to identify possible links to wider smuggling networks.

The seizure in Herat is part of a broader series of counter-narcotics operations being carried out nationwide. Afghan authorities have reiterated that anti-narcotics police will spare no effort in curbing drug production and trafficking in post-war Afghanistan, which for decades was one of the world's largest sources of opium.

In a statement issued on December 11, the Ministry of Interior Affairs said Afghan counter-narcotics police had arrested at least 31 suspected drug smugglers and seized 258 kilograms of illicit drugs during coordinated operations in several provinces. The confiscated drugs included 194 kilograms of opium, 35 kilograms of hashish, and 29 kilograms of methamphetamine.

According to the ministry, these operations were conducted in the western province of Herat and the northern provinces of Kunduz and Baghlan, where four individuals were detained. In addition, a separate series of raids in the capital, Kabul, resulted in the arrest of 27 suspects accused of involvement in the sale, purchase, and smuggling of illegal drugs. Earlier, on December 10, provincial police spokesman Ehsanullah Kamgar said Afghan police arrested another individual in northern Afghanistan's Badakhshan province on charges of drug smuggling.

Missing Belgian woman's phone found 2 yrs after she disappeared

SYDNEY

Police in Australia's Tasmania said on Sunday they will join a privately organized search for Belgian woman Celine Cremer, who went missing in remote wilderness more than two years ago, after her mobile phone was discovered. Cremer disappeared near Philosopher Falls in June 2023. Her car was found nearby days later, but extensive searches uncovered no trace of her. This weekend, a search organized by her friends and family located her phone in an area previously searched. Police confirmed the phone belongs to Cremer and will undergo forensic analysis. Inspector Andrew Hanson said phone data suggests Cremer may have left the marked track using a navigation app to return to her car as daylight faded, possibly dropping the phone and becoming disoriented. Four friends traveled from Belgium to assist in the five-day search.

Police respond to developing incident at Sydney's Bondi Beach

Continued from page 1

Australian police on Sunday said they were responding to a developing incident at Sydney's iconic Bondi Beach and urged members of the public to avoid the area as a precautionary measure. Authorities confirmed that emergency services were deployed and the situation was ongoing.

In a statement issued on social media platform X, the New South Wales Police advised people in and around Bondi Beach to remain alert and follow official instructions. Anyone at the scene should take shelter, the police said, without providing further details about the nature of the incident.

Local media reports added to the uncertainty surrounding the situation. The Sydney Morning Herald reported that there were unconfirmed accounts of multiple gunshots being fired near the popular beach destination. However, it remained unclear whether anyone had been injured or whether the reports had been officially verified by authorities.

Bondi Beach, one of Australia's most visited tourist spots, was busy at the time of the incident, prompting concerns over public safety. Police have not released information about suspects, possible motives, or the scale of the security operation, citing the evolving nature of the situation.

Emergency responders were seen converging on the area, and access to certain sections around the beach was reportedly restricted as a precaution. Authorities have asked the public to stay away to allow police and emergency services to manage the situation safely and efficiently.

New South Wales Police said further updates would be provided as more information becomes available. They also urged the public to rely only on official channels for accurate information and avoid spreading unverified reports.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

	6	1	9		4	3		
9				1			6	7
	4	3	5		7	9		
3	1			4	5	2		9
		6	8				7	
4	8			7	9	6		5
6		9	2		1	8		3
	2			3			9	
8		4	7		6	5		1

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

1	4	6	8	5	9	3	7	2
7	2	8	6	3	4	1	5	9
9	5	3	7	2	1	6	4	8
2	8	4	5	1	6	7	9	3
5	3	1	9	4	7	2	8	6
6	7	9	3	8	2	5	1	4
8	6	2	4	7	5	9	3	1
3	9	5	1	6	8	4	2	7
4	1	7	2	9	3	8	6	5

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

GREEK FARMERS PROTEST

Greek farmers reject talks, vow to intensify protests

ATHENS

Greek farmers have rejected a government invitation for talks and vowed to intensify their protests, which have disrupted traffic and economic activity across the country for a third consecutive week. The decision was taken at a nationwide meeting of farmer representatives held, reflecting growing frustration within the agricultural community over delayed payments and unresolved structural challenges.

According to farmer leaders, dialogue with the government will only take place after authorities respond concretely to a list of demands that farmers intend to submit. They made it clear that symbolic assurances are no longer sufficient and that meaningful engagement must be backed by firm commitments. Until then, protest actions are set to continue and expand.

The ongoing demonstrations have involved widespread blockades of highways, border crossings, and ports, severely affecting domestic travel and cross-border trade. The protests were initially triggered by delays in European Union subsidy payments following a corruption investigation into Greece's agricultural payments agency. These delays have placed additional financial strain on farmers who are already grappling with high input costs and declining margins.

Beyond subsidy issues, farmers are demanding increased state support to offset rising production costs, compensation for livestock losses due to disease outbreaks, relief for weather-related crop damage, and solutions to long-standing structural problems within the agricultural sector. These issues have accumulated over years, leaving farmers increasingly vulnerable to economic shocks.

Experts point out that Greek farmers remain heavily dependent on subsidies, which account for nearly 47 per cent of the average farmer's income. Efstathios Klonaris, professor of agricultural economics at the Agricultural University of Athens, told the local daily To Vima that the sector's dependence on subsidies has deep roots. Farmers are dependent on subsidies.

QUICK READ

Food inflation falls while CPI slowly rises

New Delhi

Food prices in India stayed in deflation at negative 2.78% in November, up from October's record low of minus 3.7%, according to a Union Bank of India report. The overall Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose to 0.71% from 0.25% last month. Core inflation eased slightly to 4.34%, while fuel costs climbed to 2.32%. Vegetable and pulse prices rose slightly month-on-month but remained sharply negative year-on-year. Edible oil inflation slowed to 7.8%. Analysts called it a "Goldilocks" moment with steady growth and low inflation. Seasonal trends may keep food inflation low in coming months.

South Korea's wealthy population sees big growth

Seoul

The number of high net worth individuals in South Korea rose over 3% last year to nearly 480,000, holding more than 1 billion won ($676,818) each, according to a KB Financial Group report. Their combined assets reached 3,066 trillion won, making up 60.8% of the nation's household wealth. Wealth growth among the rich outpaced that of average households. Around 12,000 people owned over 30 billion won, and real estate made up more than half of their assets. Most expect stocks to be the best investment next year, followed by gold, jewelry, and housing.

Bajaj Finance leads this week's market slump

Mumbai

Bajaj Finance suffered the biggest loss among India's top companies this week, with its market value dropping over Rs 19,000 crore. Overall, eight of the ten most valued firms saw combined losses of Rs 79,129 crore amid a falling stock market. ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, and SBI also faced sharp declines, while Infosys, TCS, and HDFC Bank lost billions. Only Reliance Industries and Larsen & Toubro gained, adding Rs 20,434 crore and Rs 4,911 crore respectively. Despite the downturn, these firms remain among India's most valued companies. Investor caution continues to weigh on equities.

Saving energy today secures India's power tomorrow: Joshi

The minister emphasized the government's commitment to promoting renewable energy, conservation, and building a cleaner, environmentally responsible Bharat.

NEW DELHI

Union New and Renewable Energy Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday said that saving energy today is crucial for strengthening India's energy security in the years to come. He stressed that responsible energy use will help the country move towards a safer and greener future.

In a message shared on social media platform X, the minister highlighted the importance of energy conservation in nation building. He said that every unit of power saved today adds strength to

India's energy security tomorrow and supports sustainable development. Joshi urged citizens to adopt simple and efficient energy practices in their daily lives.

The minister's remarks come at a time when the central government is strongly promoting renewable energy and conservation efforts across all sectors. He reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to building a cleaner and environmentally responsible Bharat.

Earlier, Joshi informed Parliament that the government has no plan to cancel or scrap any green energy project in the country. In a written reply, he clarified that no renewable energy project awarded so far has been cancelled, nor has any list been prepared for future cancellations.

He stated that Renewable Energy Implementing Agencies such as SECI, NTPC, NHPC and SJVN have issued letters of award for 67,554 megawatt of renewable power projects since April 2023.

Joshi also said that state governments are issuing their own renewable power tenders. In addition, renewable capacity is growing in commercial and industrial sectors through green energy open access and captive routes.

The minister noted that falling costs of solar-plus-storage systems are making them attractive to power distribution companies, as they supply electricity during peak demand hours.

Investor wealth surged as BSE-listed companies' total market capitalization surpassed Rs 470 lakh crore, gaining over Rs 3 lakh crore

Key economic cues to guide markets ahead

MUMBAI

After ending the previous week on a strong note, Indian stock markets are expected to take direction this week from several important domestic and global factors. These include wholesale price inflation data, progress in India–US trade talks, movement of the rupee, and continued foreign investor activity.

On Friday, benchmark indices ended higher. The Sensex rose 450 points, or 0.53 per cent, to close at 85,267.66, while the Nifty gained 148 points, or 0.57 per cent, settling at 26,046.95.

Broader markets performed better, with the BSE Midcap index rising 1.14 per cent and the Smallcap index climbing 0.65 per cent.

Investor wealth also increased sharply. Total market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies crossed Rs 470 lakh crore, adding over Rs 3 lakh crore in a single session.

Looking ahead, inflation data will be closely watched. The Commerce Ministry will release wholesale price inflation numbers for November on December 15.

India–US trade talks will also stay in focus. Officials from both sides recently held discussions to push forward a balanced trade agreement, which could impact trade-linked sectors.

The rupee's movement is another key factor. Foreign fund outflows, importer dollar demand, and global uncertainty have kept the currency under pressure.

Foreign portfolio investors remain net sellers, raising market concerns. Analysts said the Nifty faces resistance near 26,200, while support lies around 25,900.

A break below lower support levels may trigger fresh selling, while positive data and stable global cues could help markets extend gains in the coming sessions of the week ahead, experts added, advising investors to remain cautious and track key economic signals closely for short-term direction markets ahead.

India powers global growth with innovation drive: Prof Sood

NEW DELHI

Prof. Sood noted that a country's HDI closely links to energy use; India's 0.67 HDI requires 56 GJ per person to match developed nations

India is supporting nearly 18 per cent of the world's population while steadily moving towards its ambitious goal of becoming a $5 trillion economy, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, Prof Ajay Kumar Sood, said on Sunday.

Speaking at the First DV Kapur Foundation Energy Innovation Awards in the national capital, Prof Sood highlighted the close link between economic development and energy consumption. He said innovation in the energy sector will play a decisive role in shaping India's future growth and overall well-being.

Prof Sood pointed out that a country's Human Development Index, or HDI, is strongly connected to how much energy it uses. He noted that India's average HDI is around 0.67, while developed nations record levels close to 0.9. At present, India consumes nearly 21 gigajoules of energy per person each year, but bridging the development gap would require almost 56 gigajoules per person.

He stressed the need for urgent action and said India's innovation ecosystem is rapidly evolving. Special focus is being placed on deep-tech research through initiatives such as the Anusandhan National Research Foundation, which aligns with the vision of a Viksit Bharat.

During the event, Prof Sood felicitated innovators who have contributed to technologies that address India's growing energy needs while supporting long-term sustainability.

The Energy Innovation Awards were presented in two categories. The first category recognised young innovators below the age of 38, while the second honoured individuals and organisations for major contributions to energy technology.

Former Union Minister and Chairman of the DV Kapur Foundation, Dr Suresh Prabhu, also spoke at the event. He highlighted the changing energy landscape in India and praised the visionary leadership of Dr D V Kapur, the founder Chairman of NTPC.

Lakshadweep attracts Rs 519 cr investment

NEW DELHI

The first-ever investors' meet in Lakshadweep has recorded planned investments worth Rs 519 crore aimed at unlocking the islands' fisheries and aquaculture potential, government officials said on Sunday. The event was organised by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAHD) in collaboration with the Union Territory administration.

Union Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh highlighted that new fishing rules for India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) now allow fishermen to legally operate with an "Access Pass." This enables exports of high-value tuna and other fish products to international markets. He added that, under international law, resources from the EEZ will now be recognised as "Indian

Origin," facilitating trade further.

Singh also mentioned the issuance of 'High Seas Fishing Guidelines,' granting Indian-flagged vessels the legal right to fish in these waters. He urged investors to capitalise on opportunities in the islands, particularly in premium species like tuna, which are in strong global demand.

An interactive session allowed investors to highlight challenges such as transportation to the mainland, cold storage, ice plants, and chilled fish handling centres. They also called for value addition facilities, sashimi-grade tuna processing, fish oil refining, skilled labour development, and ornamental fish brood banks to sustainably utilise Lakshadweep's EEZ.

Minister of State S.P. Singh Baghel emphasised the islands' untapped potential, noting that current production of 14,000 tonnes could reach 1 lakh tonnes. He praised the clean and sustainable pole-and-line and handline fishing methods used in the islands and encouraged exporters to explore new markets while leveraging government schemes to strengthen the fisheries value chain.

The meet marks a significant step in promoting Lakshadweep as a global hub for sustainable and high-value fisheries, aiming to boost economic growth and employment opportunities in the region.

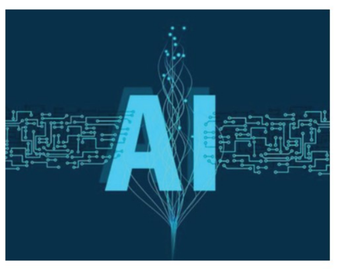
India rises as global artificial intelligence power: Report

NEW DELHI

India has emerged as the world's third most competitive country in artificial intelligence, according to Stanford University's Global AI Vibrancy Tool, released on Sunday. The ranking shows that India's rapidly expanding technology ecosystem and strong talent base are helping the country gain global importance in the race to develop advanced AI systems.

Data presented through the Visual Capitalist chart, based on Stanford's findings, places the United States firmly at the top with a vibrancy score of 78.6. China ranks second with 36.95, while India secures third place with a score of 21.59.

This achievement puts India ahead of several advanced



economies, including the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany, France, and South Korea. The AI Vibrancy Tool uses multiple indicators such as research, talent, investment, infrastructure, policy, and public opinion to measure how competitive a nation's AI environment is. It also highlights how seriously governments are supporting artificial intelligence growth.

The report notes that wealthier nations generally lead AI development, but India stands out as the only lower-middle-income country near the top. India also ranks among the top three globally in AI talent, reflecting its large pool of engineers and developers.

Experts say the ranking signals growing investment, strong research output, and a thriving startup culture. However, the study warns that unequal AI access could widen global inequality if growth remains concentrated among few nations.

For India, the ranking is seen as a major confidence boost for its digital future and innovation-driven economic growth journey. It strengthens India's position as a key global technology hub in the coming decade and beyond for emerging digital economies worldwide today overall.

DIIs outpace FIIs with strong equity buying momentum

MUMBAI

Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) have significantly outpaced foreign institutional investors (FIIs) in equity markets so far this December, analysts said that FIIs have sold shares worth Rs 15,959 crore, while DIIs have purchased equities totaling Rs 39,965 crore during the same period.

Dr. VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Investments, noted that sustained FII selling is unlikely to continue, given the economy's strong performance, improving earnings prospects, and steady inflows from mutual fund systematic investment plans (SIPs). SIP inflows have remained above Rs 29,000 crore for the last three months, with November alone recording Rs 29,445 crore, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI).

"The ongoing FII selling is being absorbed effectively by DIIs, supported by robust retail participation through SIPs," Vijayakumar said, adding that continuous FII selling is not sustainable when economic fundamentals remain strong.

Analysts also highlighted that temporary factors, including rupee depreciation, delays in finalising the India-US trade deal, and AI-related developments, have created short-term market pressures but are unlikely to derail growth.

ADB approves $240 million loan for Chennai Metro

NEW DELHI

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a USD 240 million loan to support the expansion of Chennai's metro rail network, officials said on Sunday. This forms the second tranche of the Chennai Metro Rail Investment Project, part of a USD 780 million multi-tranche financing facility approved in 2022. The first tranche included a USD 350 million loan.

The funding will help develop key sections of metro lines 3, 4, and 5, covering 20 kilometers of elevated and underground corridors and 18 new stations. These stations will feature universal access and disaster-resilient infrastructure to ensure passenger safety during extreme weather events.

"This project will deliver safer, faster, and more reliable daily travel in Chennai while advancing the city's low-carbon development goals," said ADB Country Director for India, Mio Oka. He added that the bank looks forward to continued collaboration to expand metro connectivity and strengthen the city's suburban rail system.

Tranche 2 will finance civil and system works for line 3's elevated section (Sholinganallur–SIPCOT-2), line 4's underground section (Lighthouse–Kodambakkam), and key system components for line 5, including power, traction, and telecommunications. It will also support upgrades to multimodal interchange areas for smoother transfers between metro, buses, bicycles, and other last-mile options.

The project will enhance station inclusivity, improve travel safety for women and vulnerable users, and implement measures to boost non-fare revenue for long-term financial sustainability. Construction under this tranche is expected to be completed by mid-2028.

ADB, a leading multilateral development bank established in 1966, supports inclusive and sustainable growth across Asia and the Pacific. The bank works with its 69 members, including 50 from the region, to develop infrastructure, improve livelihoods, and address environmental challenges.

SUSTAINING ECONOMIC MOMENTUM

CII lays investment blueprint for next decade

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Union Budget 2026–27, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has proposed a six-point investment roadmap aimed at sustaining India's growth over the next decade. The industry body said strong and steady investment will be vital for keeping India among the world's fastest-growing major economies.

CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said the upcoming Budget must balance stability with growth. He stressed that boosting investments across public, private and foreign sectors should be

a key focus area.

The first recommendation is to strengthen public capital expenditure, which has driven India's recovery after the pandemic. CII suggested raising central government capital spending by 12 per cent and increasing support to states by 10 per cent in FY27. Focus should remain on sectors like transport, energy, logistics and green projects.

To improve efficiency, CII proposed a Capital Expenditure Efficiency Framework to select high-impact projects and closely track their progress and outcomes. It also called for launching a Rs 150 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline 2.0 for the period 2026–32 to give long-term clarity to investors.

The second priority is boosting private investment, which CII said will be the main engine of future growth. It noted that recent tax relief and GST reforms have supported demand, and the next step should be encouraging private sector spending.

Third, CII suggested setting up an NRI Investment Promotion Fund to attract long-term capital into priority sectors like infrastructure and artificial intelligence. Fourth, it recommended strengthening the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund through better alignment with national goals.

The fifth proposal focuses on easing external commercial borrowing rules to improve access to global funds. Lastly, CII called for creating an India Global Economic Forum to deepen engagement with global investors and institutions.

Bhaichung Bhutia calls chaos at Messi's Kolkata event 'disappointing'

Former captain blames poor organisation for denting India's sporting image

RAIPUR

Former India football captain Bhaichung Bhutia expressed disappointment over the chaos that erupted during Argentine great Lionel Messi's event in Kolkata, saying the episode reflected poorly on the country and denied genuine fans the chance to see their idol.

He urged organisers to learn lessons to prevent a repeat of such incidents.

Bhutia was speaking to reporters at the airport in Raipur after returning from Jagdalpur, where he attended the closing ceremony of the Bastar Olympic 2025. His remarks came a day after angry fans vandalised parts of the Salt Lake Stadium, alleging mismanagement during Messi's G.O.A.T India Tour 2025, prompting deployment of police and the Rapid Action Force.

"It is a bit disappointing because I heard that around 80,000 fans turned up. Everybody loves Messi, but genuine fans did not really get to see him, which is very unfortunate," Bhutia said. "It also spoils the country's name."

Calling Messi's visit a good initiative marred by poor planning, Bhutia said organisers appeared overwhelmed. "What we saw and heard was that many unwanted, self-claimed VIPs surrounded Messi, while genuine fans didn't get to see him. People travel long distances and pay to watch their hero.

When that doesn't happen, frustration is natural," he added, noting that fans had come from Bengal and the Northeast.

Asked about the state of Indian football, Bhutia said it was "not in great shape" at present but expressed hope that issues would be addressed in the future.

He also praised the Bastar Olympic as a meaningful effort to connect youth, especially from Naxal-affected areas, with sports.

"Sports is the best medium to engage the younger generation. I hope Chhattisgarh, particularly Bastar, produces fine sportspersons," he said, adding that tribal communities are naturally gifted in sports, citing the Northeast's medal-winning record.

The End of an Era: John Cena retires after 23 year WWE career

WASHINGTON

One of professional wrestling's most enduring careers came to an emotional close as John Cena ended his 23-year journey in World Wrestling Entertainment with a defeat against Gunther at Saturday Night's Main Event. The 17-time world champion was forced to tap out to the "Ring General," marking the first time in nearly 20 years that Cena had submitted in a WWE contest.

The stunning result left fans inside the sold-out Capital One Arena in disbelief, many watching with hands on their heads as the reality of Cena's farewell sank in. With the loss, Cena closed his career boasting a remarkable resume: 17-time World Champion, five-time United States Champion, four-time Tag Team Champion, two-time Royal Rumble winner and a former Intercontinental champion.

After the bell, Cena soaked in the atmosphere, acknowledging the crowd that had supported him for more than two decades. In a symbolic gesture, he placed his shoes and armband in the centre of the ring before walking up the ramp for the final time.

"It's been an honour," Cena said, drawing a thunderous ovation.

Moments later, the entire WWE roster emerged to salute the departing legend. In a touching tribute, Cody Rhodes and CM Punk draped their championship belts over Cena's shoulders, underlining the respect he commands across generations.

In the match itself, Gunther dominated early, using his power and precision to keep Cena on the defensive. Cena rallied with trademark moves, including the Five Knuckle Shuffle and an Attitude Adjustment, igniting chants of "You still got it." However, Gunther weathered the storm, regained control and ultimately forced Cena to submit, sealing a decisive victory.

Earlier, The Undertaker paid tribute on social media, recalling Cena's 2002 debut and praising his lifelong commitment to "Hustle, Loyalty and Respect." As the curtain falls, Cena leaves behind a legacy defined by resilience, discipline and an unmatched connection with fans worldwide.

Icon bows out as iconic superstar submits in emotional Washington farewell showdown

Edited Instagram caption ignites speculation about Cristiano Ronaldo joining final Fast & Furious film

Vin Diesel's Instagram tease sparks CR7 Fast & Furious rumours

LOS ANGELES

A subtle edit to an Instagram caption by Vin Diesel has set social media abuzz, with fans speculating that football icon Cristiano Ronaldo could feature in the final chapter of the Fast & Furious franchise. The post, showing Diesel posing alongside Ronaldo, quickly drew attention after followers noticed a quiet but telling change in its wording.

In the original caption, Diesel recalled having once written a role for Ronaldo in Los Bandoleros, a 2009 short film that served as a prelude to the Fast & Furious universe. While the football superstar was considered at the time, the idea never materialised on screen. However, the edited caption appeared to revive that long-standing "what if".

The updated text read: "Everyone asked, would he be in the Fast mythology… I gotta tell you he is a real one. We wrote a role for him…" The rephrasing, brief as it was, proved enough to send fans into overdrive. Many interpreted it as a hint that Ronaldo might finally be stepping into the Fast & Furious world.

The comments section was soon flooded with theories, ranging from Ronaldo playing a high-octane antagonist to appearing in a cameo befitting the franchise's global scale. Others cautioned that Diesel's words could simply be a playful nod to past conversations rather than a casting reveal.

So far, there has been no official confirmation from the actor or the studio regarding Ronaldo's involvement in Fast & Furious 11, also known as Fast X: Part 2. Until an announcement is made, the speculation remains just that.

The upcoming film is expected to serve as the concluding instalment of the blockbuster series. Diesel will reprise his role as Dominic Toretto, joined by Dwayne Johnson, Jason Momoa and Jason Statham. Reports have also hinted at a respectful return of Brian O'Conner, portrayed by the late Paul Walker. With anticipation already high for the franchise's finale, Diesel's cryptic tease has only added fuel to the excitement surrounding one of cinema's most talked-about action sagas.

India make maiden entry into Squash World Cup final

CHENNAI

India scripted history a commanding 3-0 victory over two-time champions Egypt to reach the Squash World Cup final for the first time. Backed by strong individual performances, the hosts delivered one of their finest displays of the tournament to stun a traditional powerhouse and keep their title hopes alive.

Seeded second, India will now face Hong Kong China in the summit clash at the Express Avenue Mall. Hong Kong China secured their place in the final after defeating Japan in the other semifinal of the 12-team competition.

National champion Velavan Senthilkumar set the tone for India with a clinical start. Ranked 45th in the world, Velavan brushed aside world No. 96 Ibrahim Elkabbani 7-1, 7-3, 7-6 to hand the hosts an early advantage. The momentum was maintained by India's top-ranked women's player Anahat Singh, who produced a gritty performance to overcome Nour Heikal in a five-game battle, winning 6-7, 7-5, 7-3, 3-7, 7-3 and stretching India's lead to 2-0.

The decisive point came through Abhay Singh, who showed remarkable composure to defeat Adam Hawal 7-5, 6-7, 7-5, 7-6. Abhay, who had partnered Anahat to win bronze at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games, ensured there was no way back for Egypt, champions in 2012 and 2023.

PCB miffed after ICC omits skipper Agha from T20 WC ticket sales poster

KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has expressed displeasure with the International Cricket Council (ICC) after the global governing body released a promotional poster for ticket sales of next year's T20 World Cup without featuring Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha.

According to a reliable PCB source, the issue has already been taken up with the ICC. The poster in question showcased only five captains — Suryakumar Yadav of India, Aiden Markram of South Africa, Mitchell Marsh of Australia, Dasun Shanaka of Sri Lanka, and Harry Brook of England — while leaving out Pakistan's skipper.

"We faced the same issue when the Asia Cup was held a few months back. At that time, the broadcasters had started a promotional campaign without our captain featuring in it," the source said. He added that the situation was corrected only after the PCB formally raised the matter with the Asian Cricket Council.

"We are facing a similar situation again, as the ICC has not projected our captain on the promotional poster for ticket sales," the source noted, describing the omission as disappointing.

While acknowledging that Pakistan are currently not among the top five teams in the ICC T20 rankings, the source stressed that the team carries a rich cricketing legacy and remains one of the biggest attractions in any World Cup. "Pakistan has always been a major draw for fans globally, regardless of rankings," he said.

The PCB believes that such promotional material should reflect the inclusivity and global nature of the tournament, especially when it involves one of the sport's most followed teams.

The source added that the board is confident the ICC will address the concern and ensure Pakistan's captain is included in upcoming promotional posters and campaigns related to the T20 World Cup.

National wrestling: Aman reigns supreme in 61kg despite injury

AHMEDABAD

Paris Olympics bronze medallist Aman Sehrawat underlined his class and resilience by claiming the men's freestyle 61kg gold medal at the National Wrestling Championships, despite battling a painful eyebrow injury, at the Veer Savarkar Sports Complex in Naranpura.

Competing in Railways' colours, Aman produced a series of authoritative performances to stamp his authority in the weight category. Recently cleared to compete after his suspension — imposed for exceeding the 57kg weight limit at the World Championships in Zagreb — was revoked last month, Aman chose to wrestle in the heavier 61kg division to avoid the strain of drastic weight cuts.

He began his campaign by overpowering Kerala's Adhit Narayan 12-1 before demolishing Madhya Pradesh's Lalit 10-0 in the quarterfinals. During that bout, a clash of heads left Aman with a gash above his left eyebrow, resulting in visible bleeding and swelling. Unfazed, the Olympic medallist returned to the mat with renewed focus.

In the semifinals, Aman showed composure and tactical maturity, recovering from a 0-2 deficit to defeat Rajasthan's Anuj Kumar 13-2. He then capped off a dominant run by trouncing Delhi's Nikhil 10-0 in the final, wrestling with a heavily bandaged head to seal the title emphatically.

"An injury is part of the sport. It was a good outing," Aman said after the final, even as he obliged fans by posing for photographs despite the visible wound.

Elsewhere, world under-23 champion Sujeet Kalkal asserted himself as the leading wrestler in the 65kg category, beating seasoned rival Vishal Kaliraman 10-0 in the final, signalling a new era in the weight class following the Bajrang Punia phase.

In the 57kg division, Ankush claimed gold after defeating Atish Todkar 10-0 in the final, while other categories witnessed several one-sided bouts, underlining the depth of domestic talent on display.

Cameron Green says no complacency as Aus aim to seal Ashes in Adelaide

ADELAIDE

Australia all-rounder Cameron Green has warned against any hint of complacency as the hosts prepare for the third Test against England, mindful of how quickly momentum can shift in an Ashes series. Despite holding a commanding 2-0 lead, Green said lessons from the 2023 contest in England remain fresh.

Australia dominated the early part of that series, winning at Edgbaston and Lord's, before England rallied to win two of the final three Tests, with the other ending in a draw. The series finished 2-2, allowing Australia, led by Pat Cummins, to retain the Ashes as holders.

"That's a good reminder for our team to stay really level," Green told reporters ahead of the third Test at the Adelaide Oval, which begins on Wednesday. "You can sometimes look a bit too far ahead, but it's important we stay focused and finish it off properly."

The odds are firmly stacked in Australia's favour on home soil after convincing eight-wicket victories in Perth and Brisbane. England have not won a Test series in Australia since their 2010–11 tour, and Ben Stokes's side has faced criticism for its preparation and intensity, coming under heavy media scrutiny during the tour.

Green expressed sympathy for the touring side following an incident involving a security guard and a cameraman at Brisbane airport. "You never like getting filmed when you're trying to get away from it," he said. "Anyone in that situation deserves a bit of understanding."

Formula One: 'Nice guy' Norris finishes first, finally!

ABU DHABI

Under the Yas Marina lights, Lando Norris fulfilled a promise a year in the making, sealing his maiden Formula One Drivers' Championship in a moment that warmed the sport. Leading the standings entering the finale, the McLaren driver needed a podium and delivered under pressure. Passed early by team-mate Oscar Piastri and hounded by Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, Norris kept his composure as Max Verstappen lurked in contention. A measured, mature drive earned Norris third place — just enough to clinch the title by two points. In a sport shaped by ruthless champions, Norris prevailed his own way, proving that calm, clean racing can still win titles.

Lionel Messi event organiser remanded, enquiry panel inspects Salt Lake Stadium

Probe intensifies after chaos erupts during Messi visit as organiser faces custody

KOLKATA

Satadru Dutta, the prime organiser of the high-profile Lionel Messi football event in Kolkata, was on Sunday remanded to 14 days of police custody by a Bidhannagar court, even as members of an enquiry committee visited the Salt Lake Stadium to assess lapses in crowd management and security arrangements.

Dutta was arrested by Bidhannagar City Police late Saturday, hours after angry fans vandalised parts of the stadium minutes after Messi left the venue. The Argentine football icon's brief and tightly guarded appearance triggered widespread resentment among spectators, many of whom had paid steep prices for tickets but failed to get even a glimpse of the star.

When Dutta was produced before the court on Sunday, local residents and football fans gathered outside, raising slogans and branding the organiser a "thief", reflecting the depth of public anger over the alleged mismanagement. Police sources said the remand was sought to investigate possible cheating, breach of trust and lapses related to safety and crowd control.

The incident also drew the attention of West Bengal Governor C. V. Ananda Bose, who visited the Salt Lake Stadium earlier in the day. The Governor interacted with officials and members of the enquiry committee and later said he would submit a detailed report to the Centre after reviewing the findings. He stressed the need for accountability and robust protocols for organising international sporting events involving global icons.

According to officials, preliminary observations suggest serious coordination failures between organisers, security personnel and ticketing agencies. Fans alleged that access points were abruptly blocked and Messi was whisked away without any interaction, despite promotional assurances suggesting a longer public presence.

The enquiry committee's visit focused on seating arrangements, barricading, deployment of security staff and adherence to permissions granted for the event. Its report is expected to play a key role in determining responsibility and recommending corrective measures.

Meanwhile, police said further arrests were not ruled out as investigators examine financial transactions, ticket sales and contractual commitments linked to the event. The case has cast a shadow over Kolkata's attempt to showcase itself as a destination for marquee international sporting spectacles.

Top stars set to light up third edition of GCL

MUMBAI

Global Chess League returns in grand style as Mumbai hosts star-studded Season Three

After successful editions in Dubai and London, the Global Chess League (GCL) has arrived in Mumbai, a city whose scale, energy and diversity make it an ideal stage for the third season of the innovative chess extravaganza. The league will unfold over the next 10 days at the iconic Royal Opera House, promising elite competition blended with glamour and entertainment.

A joint venture between Tech Mahindra and the FIDE, the GCL has been conceived as a bold reimagining of how chess can be presented to global audiences. Drawing inspiration from the Indian Premier League, the competition features a franchise-based format, mixed-gender teams and rapid-fire matches designed to appeal to both purists and new fans of the sport.

Season Three is set to feature an array of world-class players, including reigning champions, former world title contenders and emerging prodigies.

The presence of marquee names alongside young talents has become a defining feature of the league, creating intriguing match-ups and unpredictable outcomes. The previous two editions delivered thrilling contests and dramatic finishes, raising expectations for another memorable chapter.

The league's growing stature was underlined at the launch, attended by Anand Mahindra, Chairman of the Mahindra Group, whose vision has been central to the GCL's rapid rise. Mahindra has repeatedly emphasised the need to present chess as both a serious sport and a compelling spectator experience, a balance the league has managed to strike effectively.

Beyond the chessboard, the GCL has also carved a niche through its production values, team branding and fan engagement initiatives. By hosting matches at a historic venue like the Royal Opera House, organisers hope to further elevate the league's profile and create a unique ambience that sets it apart from traditional tournaments.

As Mumbai rolls out the red carpet, anticipation is high that Season Three will not only showcase top-tier chess but also reinforce the Global Chess League's status as the most glamorous and innovative competition in the world of mind sports.

Arsenal survive scare as own goals secure dramatic victory against Wolves

Two own goals save Arsenal as it beats Wolves 2-1 in EPL

LONDON

Arsenal survived a nervy encounter against bottom club Wolverhampton Wanderers, claiming a 2-1 victory thanks to two own goals, one in stoppage time, at the Emirates Stadium. The win moves the Gunners five points clear of Manchester City atop the Premier League table.

Manager Mikel Arteta admitted his side struggled to create clear chances, describing the result as "a boost" despite a nervy performance. Arsenal failed to register a single shot on target in the first half, with Gabriel Martinelli squandering multiple opportunities.

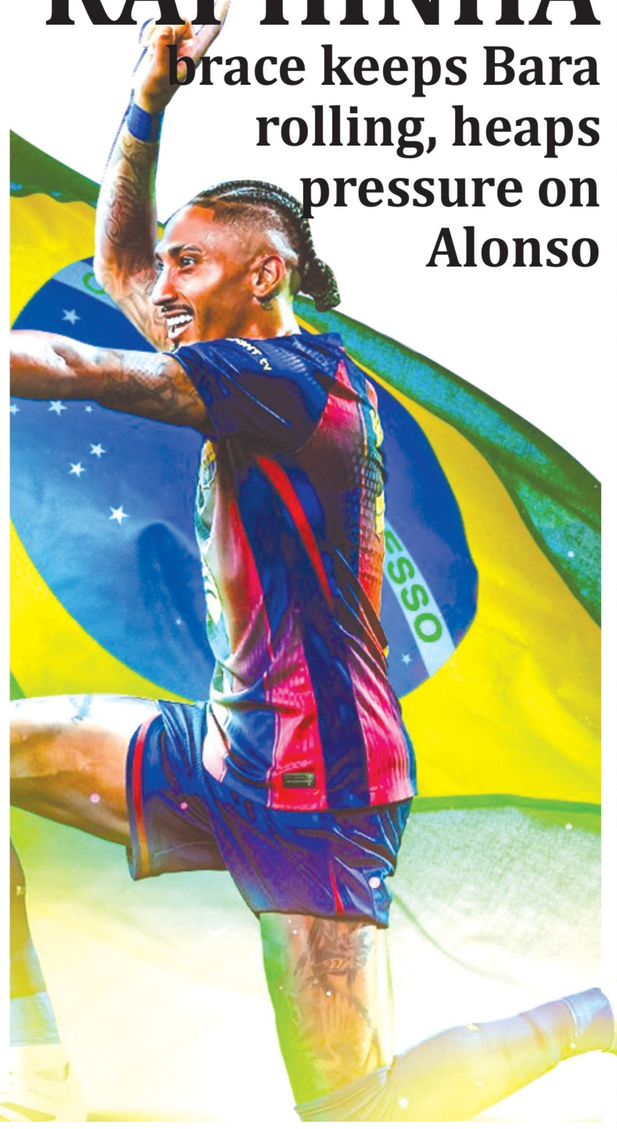
Arteta made three substitutions shortly after the hour mark, bringing on Leandro Trossard, Martin Odegaard and Mikel Merino, which helped spur the hosts into sustained attacking pressure. Declan Rice's second-half effort marked Arsenal's first on-target shot, saved by Wolves goalkeeper Sam Johnstone.

The deadlock broke in the 70th minute when Saka's corner struck Johnstone, ricocheted off his arm, and crossed the line for an own goal. Wolves showed resilience, leveling in the 90th minute through Tolu Arokodare's header off Mateus Mané's cross.

However, Arsenal secured a dramatic late winner when Bukayo Saka's cross was deflected into the net by Wolves defender Yerson Mosquera, completing the second own goal. The Gunners breathed a sigh of relief as Wolves extended their winless streak to nine league games, managing just two points from 16 matches, and remaining on course for their worst Premier League season. Arsenal now look to consolidate their lead, while Pep Guardiola's Manchester City travel to in-form Crystal Palace, seeking to close the gap.

BARCELONA

RAPHINHA brace keeps Bara rolling, heaps pressure on Alonso



Raphinha struck twice as Barcelona beat Osasuna 2-0, extending their La Liga lead and intensifying scrutiny on Real Madrid coach Xabi Alonso ahead of a pivotal away game at Alaves.

The Brazil forward broke the deadlock in the 70th minute with a crisp strike from the edge of the area at Camp Nou before sealing the result with a close-range finish six minutes from time. The victory marked Barcelona's seventh straight league win, lifting the defending champions seven points clear at the summit before Madrid take the field on Sunday.

Barcelona have surged since overturning a five-point deficit following their Clasico defeat in late October. In contrast, Madrid's form has dipped alarmingly, with just one win in five league outings and two victories in their last eight matches across competitions. A recent home loss to Celta Vigo compounded the malaise, leaving Alonso under growing pressure.

The home crowd revelled in their rival's woes, chanting "Stay Xabi!" during the second half, but Raphinha insisted Barcelona's focus remained internal. "If we do our job, we don't have to worry about anyone else," he said, praising the team's consistency and momentum.

Osasuna, 16th, defended stubbornly for long spells, with goalkeeper Sergio Herrera denying Lamine Yamal and seeing Marcus Rashford's effort blocked.

Miller tipped to be among costliest buys at IPL 2026 mini auction, says Bangar

NEW DELHI

David Miller is expected to be among the top three most expensive players at the upcoming TATA IPL 2026 mini auction, according to former India batter and JioStar expert Sanjay Bangar, as franchises fine-tune their strategies ahead of the December 16 event.

With the mini auction approaching, experts weighed in on players likely to attract fierce bidding, including Venkatesh Iyer, Ravi Bishnoi, Cameron Green, Liam Livingstone, Daryl Mitchell, Miller and Jonny Bairstow.

Bangar believes Miller's finishing prowess makes him a premium target. "David Miller will likely be among the top three most expensive players in this auction. Several teams need someone with his experience and composure at the death," he said, adding that franchises such as Gujarat Titans and Kolkata Knight Riders could benefit from the South African's presence, especially with the latter reshaping their core.

Former chief selector MSK Prasad highlighted Venkatesh Iyer's versatility, calling him a "special talent" capable of opening, anchoring the middle order or finishing games for Kolkata Knight Riders. "That kind of flexibility significantly boosts his value at the auction," Prasad noted.

On Ravi Bishnoi, Prasad pointed to the leg-spinner's energy, consistency and fielding excellence. He suggested that Sunrisers Hyderabad, short on quality spin options, and Chennai Super Kings, whose home conditions favour spinners, could both be keen suitors.

Dale Steyn underlined Liam Livingstone's impact as a power-hitter and multi-skilled all-rounder. "He brings a fear factor and can also contribute with both off-spin and leg-spin," the former South Africa pacer said. Irfan Pathan tipped Cameron Green to draw strong interest from teams like KKR and CSK, citing his ability to contribute in both departments.

McCullum admits England have been 'nowhere near' their best

ADELAIDE

England coach Brendon McCullum admitted on Sunday that his side had been "nowhere near" their best in the first two Ashes Tests, while asserting that he would not make drastic changes to a settled lineup ahead of the crucial third Test at the Adelaide Oval.

After heavy eight-wicket defeats in Perth and Brisbane, England face an uphill battle to keep the five-match series alive. McCullum confirmed that the top seven batsmen would remain unchanged, retaining Ollie Pope at number three despite mounting criticism, rather than bringing in Jacob Bethell. "Knee-jerk reactions and chopping and changing settled batting line-ups is not really our way," McCullum said.

The tourists' preparation and lack of fight have come under scrutiny, particularly McCullum's admission that the team "trained too much" before the Brisbane Test, a claim met with disbelief by former players. The team's decision to spend time on the beach in Noosa before moving to Adelaide also drew criticism, though McCullum defended it as a planned break to regain freshness and focus.

"I don't think we've been anywhere near our best so far in these last two Tests … but what's been has been," he said. "Now, it's focusing on the one that's coming. I firmly believe that if we play our best cricket, we're a massive chance in this Test match. We do that, and the narrative changes in the series."

McCullum dismissed concerns about his job security, emphasizing conviction in his methods and faith in the players. He added that the team remains motivated and excited to train in the coming days, aiming to mount a strong response and salvage pride in Adelaide.

England now face a must-win scenario if they are to extend the series and prevent Australia from taking an unassailable lead in the Ashes.

England coach acknowledges struggles while maintaining confidence ahead of Adelaide Test

Teenage pair Ndjantou, Mbaye star as PSG beat Metz to go top

PARIS

Teenagers Quentin Ndjantou and Ibrahim Mbaye produced eye-catching performances as Paris Saint-Germain returned to the top of Ligue 1 with a hard-fought 3-2 victory over bottom-placed Metz.

Ndjantou scored his first senior goal for PSG, while Mbaye provided two assists in an impressive attacking display. Goncalo Ramos opened the scoring for the visitors before substitute Desire Doue netted what proved to be the decisive third goal.

PSG coach Luis Enrique heaped praise on Ndjantou, calling him "the surprise of the beginning of the season" and highlighting his ability to combine midfield intelligence with forward movement. He was equally pleased with Mbaye, saying the 17-year-old showed freedom and confidence both on and off the ball.

With the Intercontinental Cup final against Flamengo looming in Qatar, Luis Enrique rotated heavily, resting several regular starters. Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele missed out due to illness, while Doue, Bradley Barcola, Joao Neves, Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and goalkeeper Lucas Chevalier all began on the bench.

Despite the changes, PSG struck first when Ramos headed in Lee Kang-in's cross on 31 minutes. Ndjantou doubled the lead eight minutes later, sliding home Mbaye's teasing delivery. Metz responded quickly through Jessy Deminguet's powerful strike from outside the box.

The hosts pressed after the break, with Habib Diallo missing a good chance to equalise. PSG regained control when Mbaye released Doue on a devastating counter-attack, the substitute racing clear from his own half to finish clinically.

Georgi Tsitaishvili's late curling effort set up a tense finale, but PSG held firm to secure the points and climb back to the summit. Lens can reclaim top spot on Sunday, while PSG turn their focus to continental duty buoyed by the emergence of their teenage stars.

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